

NOVELS AND TALES
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VOL. CCCCXVI.

NOVELS AND TALES.

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VOL. VI.

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1857.

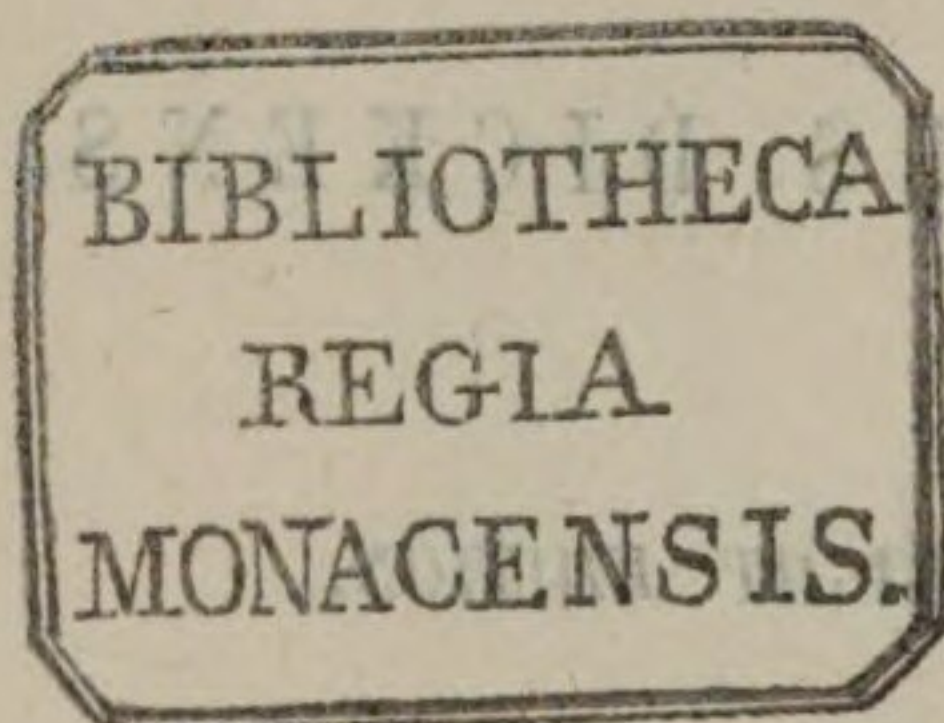
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NOVELS AND TALES.

VOL. VI.

ELEANOR CLARE'S JOURNAL FOR TEN YEARS.

CHAPTER I.

BURNBANK COTTAGE, *July the seventh, Eighteen hundred and forty-four.* — Mrs. Lake said to me this morning in her grave, impressive fashion, "My dear love, it is a very serious responsibility to be an heiress."

She was looking straight into me, as it were, and I felt that she was in such solemn earnest that I dared not turn it off with a laugh, as I could have done if anybody else had made the remark. Indeed, for a moment, a perfect spasm of terror made my heart quiver again; I could scarcely get my breath, and went red and white, hot and cold, half-a-dozen times in as many minutes.

I cannot be glad as I know some girls would. I never knew what it was to want money, and so don't set much store by it — I don't see how it can make me any happier than I have been, but I do see how it can make me a very great deal more miserable.

Ever since Mrs. Lake said that about its being a serious responsibility, I have felt as if I had got a great

heavy yoke about my neck. I wonder what Uncle Robert meant by laying such a burden upon me, when there were Cousin Henry and Cousin Jane who would have borne it with so much more dignity — who would have rejoiced in it, sleeping and waking, which I shall never, never do! He might have built a church (and sorely they want one at Burnshead), or endowed a hospital; he might have done a thousand things with it more sensible and profitable than bequeathing it to me whom he had never seen, and who am not the least bit grateful for it.

What am I to do with eighty thousand pounds? If I were a man I would go into business, and speculate with it, and get rid of it: I hate trouble and anxiety about money, and I love to sit with dear Grannie in this pretty old drawing-room, and read, or sew, or idle, just as it pleases me. I never felt to want anything grander or better: our life seemed quite sufficient for me, and now it will be changed — all changed!

I am a very common-place, unambitious body, no doubt, but I can't help it. I don't want to be magnificent and do great deeds: I never had an aspiration in my life! I like to give Ailie Martin five shillings and a flannel petticoat at Christmas, or to help anybody whose cow or donkey dies; but as for having my name put in charitable subscription-lists, as other people's are, with great sums of money after them, it would make me want to hide my head for shame at my ostentation! I said yesterday to Grannie and Cousin Jane, that I believed this fine fortune would prove the plague of my life, and Cousin Jane bade me not talk so wildly, I should be glad enough of it some day; Grannie only sighed: in her heart she thinks as I do — that I shall be neither the happier nor the better for it.

It has already made me have some disagreeable thoughts: — the Curlings, who are generally so high and mighty, and scarcely vouchsafe me a word, when they called the other day literally abased themselves before me; it would have delighted me to throw a sofa-cushion at Mary Jane when she began to praise what she styled my beautiful indifference to sordid dross; and if I had done it, I believe she would only have called it a charming outbreak of girlish vivacity! They asked me to tea, and I said I would not go; Grannie scolded me afterwards for being rude and abrupt to them: well, — I dare say I was rude and abrupt, and I will never be anything else to people I dislike.

Then, poor Miss Lawson and her sister Betsy took the other view of me, and the last time I saw them were quite stiff and cold. They hoped I should not be uplifted and proud in my new position, and pretended to think that I should despise coming to have tea at five o'clock in their dingy little parlour. It was not kind, for I am fond of Betsy, and I should like to give them a couple of nice easy chairs to rest their backs, only I am such an awkward creature, I don't know how to do it. If I have to give anybody anything, I always want to do it without being seen; and if ever what I offered was refused, I am sure I would never venture to offer again. I am very stupid! It is to be hoped I shall grow used to being rich, and I am sure I say my prayers that I may do no harm with my money, even if I cannot do much good; but it is all so new to me yet, and it eases me to tell my difficulties to my little books; they are so silly, I dare not inflict them even on Grannie, who looks sad and serious whenever I attempt it.

I should like to get some method of spending my income regularly; it shall not accumulate if I can help it. When Cousin Henry comes down to-morrow there will be a grand consultation over me; I should not wonder if I were to be sent off to school somewhere: the threat has been looming in Grannie's eyes for long. But I shall not like leaving home. Burnbank will always be home to me.

It looks so lovely from the window just now! There is a little vessel with its white sails set, gliding across the glimpse of sea between the trees beyond the 'green; then the sun is out, and the wind is strong enough to keep up a continual whisper among the leaves: there are two charming little baby donkeys with their mothers, and flocks of geese, and a few children on the grass — now, one of the baby donkeys is taking maternal refreshment, and the clerk's yelping terrier, Spite, is making a scurry amongst the geese! Ferndell Park may be very grand and very beautiful, but it will be transportation to go away from Burnbank for the grandest and most beautiful place in the world — but I shall not need to live there yet!

July the ninth. — It has ended as I expected. I am to go to school! Cousin Henry is very decided, and it was of no use to rebel. He is my guardian. He reminded me that I am not sixteen years old yet, and that my education has been of the plainest. Grannie spoke up for me, and said that though I was home-taught, I was not ignorant of common things, and that what I had learnt, I had learnt thoroughly. It was good of her; but, of course, I must be far behind other girls who have had immense advantages. So this is my sentence: banishment from Burnbank, and hard labour at

the long roll of accomplishments for two years: these are the first-fruits of my heiress-ship! There is a little respite, however, for none of the schools open until August.

Since I have seen Cousin Henry and listened to his sage talk, I am more than ever impressed by the mistake Uncle Robert made in leaving his money to me instead of to him, and I believe Cousin Henry thinks it a mistake too. He had not anything very pleasant to say, and appeared to consider his task of guardian to my wilful self anything but a delightful office. When I opposed one of his schemes because I did not like it, he retorted sharply, "Wealth has its penalties, Eleanor Clare, and you must just take them along with its satisfactions. As long as you were a portionless country damsel, no one cared much what you did — now, as a rich heiress, there will be many scrutinising eyes upon you."

I shall go and talk to Mrs. Lake about it: if I am to do this and not to do that, different to myself, I shall loathe my fortune: I think Cousin Henry might have left that unsaid. People who call, ask what I am going to do; and when they are told, some say it is the most sensible and best plan, but others wonder why I do not immediately plunge into fashionable revelry — I shall never do for that!

Cousin Jane has invited herself over to Burnbank to spend a week or two: I hope she will not bring a Dorcas basket to sew at, as she did the last time she came. I want to be out of doors this glorious weather.

It was such fun once in Cousin Henry's magnificent laying down of the law for my rule and guidance! When he had settled that I was to go to school, he added precisely: "And until Eleanor's education is finished

her allowance need not be more than three hundred a-year. Afterwards, until she is of age, and my duty ceases, six hundred will be about the mark."

I spoke up immediately, and said; "No, Cousin Henry, it will not. I shall have five hundred a-year now, and immediately I leave school, I shall choose to enjoy the whole of my income."

Grannie looked so startled, and Cousin Henry sat bolt upright in his chair, drew a very long breath, and glared as if I had struck him. After a minute's pause, he asked, "But what can you do with five hundred a-year now?"

I replied, "I want to have a pretty little carriage and a pair of ponies, like Mrs. Lake's, for us at Burnbank; and in my holidays, I want a horse to ride myself — then I want to re-furnish the drawing-room, and put up a little conservatory at the glass-door end, — I want to hire Mary Burton to wait on Grannie and me, and Mary's brother to attend to the ponies, and drive Grannie about when I am away. All that can be done, Cousin Henry?"

"Certainly, it can be done," said he with a great deal of hesitation, and keeping his eye watchfully upon me.

"Then, it must be done — there, Grannie, the carriage and ponies for you!" cried I, and really for the first time I felt what a good thing money is.

Cousin Henry did not look half satisfied, but he refrained from arguing the matter — perhaps he felt a little glad, because he is very fond of Grannie, and he has far too large a family himself for there to be any likelihood of his making her old age more comfortable. He could not reasonably oppose me, because I know

Uncle Robert left his estate free from incumbrance and in perfect order; consequently there can be no pretence for accumulating money to clear or improve it.

I believe I am going to develop into a woman of business, after all. But would anybody believe it? I will tell you, my old book, but nobody else. I have been trying to calculate the interest of eighty thousand pounds at four per cent. and I can't do it! I know nothing of sums except the four first rules and long division, and I am ashamed to ask what my income will ultimately be — yet, I wish to know — and when I do know I will spend it every year up to the last shilling!

July the twelfth. — Last night I went to have tea with Miss Lawson and Betsy. I had bought two very nice easy chairs the day before at Compton, and sent them with a little note and my love. Next morning, Miss Betsy came and asked me to go in the evening; they were both so pleased with my present, and each sat in her chair all the time to show me how they appreciated them. I had felt afraid they might be affronted, but Miss Lawson said, "Never fear to do a kind action, Eleanor, now you have the means. We never could have bought these chairs ourselves, as Betsy knows, if our backs had been broken with rheumatism. We shall always think of you when we are resting in them." And she did not snap once all the while I was there.

Cousin Jane is here, as full of business and care as she usually is. I have subscribed to every one of her baskets, and all her schools, but I had hard work to beg off making sun-bonnets for the little girls of Central Africa; and whether I would or no, I have had to make two bazaar pincushions and a doll pen-wiper. I offered

her ten shillings to let me off, but she lectured me for idleness, and made me set to work. The Curlings came to invite us to join a pic-nic of theirs to the Abbey at Downham, but Grannie said No for me, and afterwards explained that she did not want me to be acquainted with the people I should meet there. I should have liked to go very well, not that I care for any of the people, but because the drive there is pleasant, and the old ruins are so beautiful.

The Curlings have undergone a wonderful transformation lately; their civility is oppressive; how I do dislike them! That Mary Jane asked me if I should continue to visit the Lawsons, and actually had the insolence to add: "The reason we never took you up so cordially as we were inclined to do, Eleanor dear, was because we really could not associate with such common people — you know they used to keep a little shop in Compton, where they sold coffee and tea."

I put on my grand air, which Grannie always says repels as decidedly as if I said, "Stand back!" and told her that my lovings and hatings had undergone no change, and that I should certainly go to Miss Lawson's as much as I had ever done. She reddened, and tried to talk about my position (she and I taking diametrically opposite views of how the said position is best respected), and opined that I should soon learn my own value.

How sick it all makes me! as if directly this misfortune happened to me I had lost my identity, and ceased to be that Eleanor Clare who went on her way rejoicing and unmolested! I don't like to think it can be true, but I have fancied that two or three people whom I have known since I was a child have ceased

liking me as well as they did. Cousin Jane, for instance: she sneers at me continually. I do hope I shall not grow suspicious: I have often heard of people with money thinking they were not loved for themselves, and I should not like it to be my own case — but as little should I approve of being envied for it. Nobody knows, and I suppose nobody ever will know, for I am not going to prate about what I cannot do — how much better pleased and how much happier I should have been, if Uncle Robert had divided his property among the three of us, instead of leaving it all to me. Grannie says my mother was always his pet, but she evidently thinks that Ferndell ought to have been Cousin Henry's, so that it might have been kept in the name of Favell instead of passing to the Clare's — to be sure, it was not family property: Uncle Robert earned it for himself; and had, therefore, an indisputable right to bequeath it as he would, but his will has not given satisfaction to any of us — not even to me, his heiress.

I should like to know what made him pass over Cousin Henry and Cousin Jane. If I might hazard such a thought, I could almost fancy that Grannie loved Uncle Robert less than her other children. He never came amongst us here, and except for the present he sent to me at Christmas, I never should have known I had such a relative. Cousin Jane does not talk of him as if she had ever seen him, but only says that she understood he was a shy, reserved man, who led, from choice, an extremely secluded life. I don't like to ask Grannie, for she never mentions him first.

July the sixteenth. — We have heard of a pair of beautiful bay ponies, that will just suit us; Grannie says she shall be able to drive them herself. They belonged

to Lady Singleton at Deerhill: the carriage is to come from London, next week: I hope we shall have one or two drives in it before I go to school.

Cousin Henry has decided upon the place to which I am to be sent. It is a Miss Thoroton's at Stockbridge — a very excellent school, he says, where I shall have every opportunity of becoming what he desires to see me! O! what does he desire to see me? A paragon, a peri, a nonpareil! My firm belief is, that if I am cultivated for a score years I shall revert to my natural pleasures and quiet idlenesses the moment the guard is off. I cannot be always thinking of what is proper and fitting to be done.

July the seventeenth. — I have had a long walk with Mrs. Lake, who told me about Uncle Robert. He was Grannie's eldest son, Cousin Henry's father is the second, and Uncle Tom was the youngest; my mother was the youngest of all. Uncle Robert made a low marriage — that is, our family felt it so — and they would not acknowledge his wife, or see him at Burnbank after: only my mother wrote him kind letters. Uncle Robert's wife was very pretty, and Mrs. Lake says, very good, too, and neither ignorant nor vulgar; but Grannie would not forgive him, and his two brothers kept up the estrangement, instead of trying to heal it. Uncle Robert loved her devotedly, but he soon lost her; and when she lay dying, it was my mother (then unmarried, and quite a girl) who visited and nursed her. This explains why he left his property to me, and why Grannie so very much dislikes to speak of him. I am glad I know about it, for mysteries are always in the way.

I am surprised Grannie should have been so harsh, but it often seems as if the best people were the most

tyrannical in trying to make others be good and happy exactly after their fashion. Cousin Jane has that way. She says to me often, — "Eleanor, do so and so, I am sure it is the right way, the only right way, and it will befall better than if you followed your own head;" — and she will talk and argue until I am fairly beaten down by an avalanche of words. If I am resolved to do as I like, there is nothing for it but running out of hearing, and that I do sometimes.

Then I had some talk with Mrs. Lake about myself, and she bids me turn a deaf ear to all warnings, doubts, and promptings, and to go straightforward in my own natural way, just as if the fortune had never come to me; and I will, if I can. There is one good thing at school — there we are all equal, fortunes or no fortunes — no, not all equal! I begin to feel as if I should turn out a fearful dunce, and rather to dread the beginning. I don't know why, but I always feel more awkward in a company of young girls about my own age than I ever do elsewhere; I think they quizz and make remarks, and then I have such a silly trick of blushing; however, it has to be, and so my courage must bear me through as well as it may.

July the twenty-fourth. — To-day Grannie and I had our first drive together in the pony carriage; it was so cosy, so charming, and will be such an ease and comfort to Grannie, now that she cannot walk far, but still finds the fresh air necessary to keep her in health. We went round by Deerhill, and the ponies wanted to turn in at the gate. Poor little things! They remembered their old home.

The Singletons are quite ruined, and are gone abroad, we hear. The odious Mary Jane Curling suggested to

me that if they had stayed at home, young Sir Edward might have married me — I should have been my lady, and my fortune would have restored Deerhill.

I can scarcely control myself when she begins to show her teeth, roll her eyes, and talk in that way. I should like to beat her, she makes me feel worse than anything or anybody I ever saw. I dislike her present free-and-easy tone far more than her former lofty one. I shall have to encase myself in my unapproachable armour whenever we meet, if we are to remain on civil terms, but I would much rather quarrel with her, and have done with it; it would be naughty, but it would save a world of trouble and hypocrisy.

A man came this morning to plan the conservatory; there is to be a glass door out of the drawing-room into it, and it is to be made on the same principle as Mrs. Lake's. It will be finished when I come home at Christmas.

It is arranged for Cousin Jane to stay at Burnbank with Grannie while I am away. This is very nice; she would have been dull alone, for, though Mary Burton is a good attentive girl, she wants some one to read aloud to her, and to drive or walk out with. Jane is too bustling and active for me — too fussy; but Grannie seems not to mind it, or else she has a way of making her sit still and keep quiet. I had to sew at a sun-bonnet to-day for peace and quietness' sake; but it is not a charitable bonnet, for I did it with the greatest ill-will possible.

July the twenty-seventh. — Grannie proposed a few days since, that to celebrate my going to school (I saw nothing to rejoice over) we must have a tea-drinking at Burnbank. I said, if we did, it should be a tea-drinking

for the children, and anybody else who chose to come without an invitation might come, but I would not have a solemn party for talk, compliments, and scandal.

I managed the affair myself. It was beautiful weather, so the children had tea in the orchard at three o'clock, and the old women had tea too. Grannie thought we should have it all to ourselves, but I knew better. I told our advertising Post, Miss Briske, that I should be glad to see any of my friends who could dispense with formality; that there would be plenty of strawberries, and other ripe fruit, and tea, coffee, and cakes, at five o'clock for them, but that I did not mean to give anybody anything unless they arrived in time to help to amuse the children.

I was sure they would come, if it was only for the novelty, and come they did, — all the Curlings, the Prices, Lucy, and Ellen Cooper, the Lawsons, Mrs. Lake, Mrs. and Miss Cranworth, Dr. Rayson and his wife, and a troop of people from the Charltons. John Burton and little Tom had quite enough to do to pick fruit all the afternoon, and every one seemed to enjoy the freedom of walking about the house and grounds, and talking to their friends; indeed, my Strawberry Party, as they called it, gave so much satisfaction that the Prices are to have one next Saturday.

But I must not forget the children, who were my chosen guests. They all arrived in due time, with mug and saucer, and sat down to regale on the tea and spice-buns we had provided; vastly they enjoyed them, too, if we might judge from the consumption that took place. At one time or another, I have taught every child in the school; so not to cause any distinction between past and present pupils, I made each one a little present,

and they chose them from the trays as they stand in their classes. My class, we call it the Encouragement Class, because Thompson always sent me the dull and backward, or idle and tiresome children, had the post of honour, and chose first.

There will be plenty of cut fingers in Burnbank for some days to come! For the boys I had provided a number of strong clasp knives, pencil cases and books; for the girls, little cases with thimble, scissors, and other working-tools; and for the small fry, gaily dressed dolls, squeaking toy sheep, dogs, and cats, &c. Cousin Jane thought it a frightful waste of money, and lectured me seriously on the folly of giving poor folks' children toys, — "wanton extravagance," she designated it, but I am sure it was pleasant to see how glad they most of them were; it never is possible to satisfy all.

Knives were in great request amongst the boys, and when they were all gone, and the little fellows came up to choose, some few looked marvellously discontented. Anty Craggs was very hard to pacify. When I said, "Now, Anty, it is your turn; what will you have?" he replied in his native Doric, "I'll ha' a knoife," though all the knives were gone. I told him he must try to be pleased with something else, but still he would only keep on reiterating, "I'll ha' a knoife," so at last I proposed the alternative of sixpence, which, after a little hesitation he condescended to accept. Another boy, Simmy Deane, would only be contented with a Dutch doll dressed in pink glazed calico and white muslin, and Betty, his sister, chose a drum.

When all the presents were distributed, we went upon the green, and the children ran races and played games. Some of the fine folk came out to encourage us

with their presence, but the Curlings, and Charltons, and Prices kept quite to themselves. Cousin Jane started the racers, and I gave the prizes. Then we had scrambles for sweeties and halfpence. In everything Anty Craggs was conspicuously unsuccessful. His fat freckled face and red hair were always panting up at the fag end of each race; and totally eclipsed, — flattened on the ground, most likely — in the thickest of every scramble. When beaten in the races, he vociferated defiantly, "I'll run 'em again, I'll run 'em again!" and when he rose empty-handed from the mêlée over the sweeties, he still cried out, "Gi'e us another chance, Miss Eleanor, I'll ha' some yet."

I could not help laughing, and liking the little fellow who would not give in, though I know he is the most perverse and naughty boy in the school.

When all the sweeties, and halfpence, and toys were gone, the children went too, gradually dispersing down to Ferny Bank and the shore; then our other company assembled in the house, and the early tea (remarkable innovation on Burnbank customs) took place for those who chose to remain. A few, who dine at half-past six and seven o'clock, departed, after expressing regret that they had had so little of my company. I believe a great many people, — all, perhaps, except Mrs. Lake and the Lawsons — took away an impression that Miss Eleanor Clare has a taste for low company. Mary Jane Curling said they were surprised I had not chosen to give a dance! As if I cared for a dance in this hot weather! And where were the partners to come from, if I had? I like the children's parties the best yet, whatever I may do by-and-by. I will give a dance, maybe, when I leave school, or when I am of age.

Dr. Rayson was very much gratified; he likes the poor things to be pleased, and says it does them good, and I would rather he thought me right than all the Curlings, Charltons, and Prices put together. I do not value their opinion at all.

I am not quite sure whether Grannie likes me to act as I do — I have doubts. She said to me, when I remarked about my indifference to what people think: "There is no need to be so violently independent, Eleanor; you will become harsh and brusque in manner if you live in such a defiant frame of mind as you have adopted lately."

Can it be true that I am (notwithstanding my indifference to its possession) actually deteriorating since this fortune befel me? I believe I am. I have thoughts I never had before. It is true, six months ago, I was shy of these fine folks whom I care nothing about now; and I know that it is because they think more of me on account of my money that the change has come. It will be a very good thing for me to be sent off to school, where I shall have something to do to keep my head steady. I believe I could have borne a good strong shock of adversity a great deal better than I am bearing my prosperity. Now I should hate myself if I became what I so particularly detest, a strong-minded, disagreeable woman — and there seems a danger of it.

July the twenty-ninth. — I am not a crying body generally, but last night, after I got to bed, I had a thorough good cry, and feel all the better for it now it is over. Cousin Jane said to me: "Eleanor, you are quite spoilt; I never saw such a conceited, dogmatical

puss as you are turning into in all my life! And you used to be a simple-minded girl enough once."

I cannot express how intense my mortification was, but I contrived to keep it still until I got to bed, and then I did cry. I was all the more vexed, because Cousin Jane was so right in what she said. I am becoming positively odious, I know I am. All the while that I have been trying to persuade myself that I cared nothing about my money I have been puffing myself up into a very balloon of arrogance. How I should have ridiculed anybody else if they had done so; and I daresay people are laughing at me! And if they are, I deserve it! There will be some good in going away from Burnbank, after all. At Miss Thoroton's, no one knows I am an heiress, no one will be constantly calling the fact to my mind, therefore, by remarks and insinuations. I shall have to wait on myself, and work hard, too. I am going on the first of August; Grannie is to take me. I wonder what it will all be like?

CHAPTER II.

STOCKBRIDGE, *August the fourth.* — This is the first chance I have got since I came to Stockbridge, of writing a word in my journal — and now it is on the sly. I came four days ago, and seem to have been in a whirl and confusion ever since; I am only just beginning to settle down.

At first it seemed as if I never should settle. Everything was so strange. There was only one girl here when I arrived (Miss Alice they call her, and she is the half-boarder); but a great many have come in yesterday and to-day — twenty-three in all. From what I have

seen, there is not one whom I feel inclined to like much, but I can tell with certainty one person I do not like, and that is Miss Alice — I cannot bear her. She helped the English teacher, Miss Smallwood (a gaunt, very disagreeable-looking woman) to unpack my boxes, make inventories of my clothes, and put them in the drawers as if she were a servant; and when it was time to dress for dinner (we dine at four) she came and asked me if I could do my own hair? When I told her I could, she said, "That's a blessing!" and went away.

She is apparently there to serve everybody — girls, teachers, and mistresses. Some of the girls seem great friends with her, but most of them are afraid of her. She is not cross or ill-natured, but she is so satirical she makes me cringe. If she only looks at me, I begin to dread that the next moment she will, as it were, spit out a sharp, stinging phrase at me, and make everybody laugh. It is her way. I was talking to Emily Clay about her, and asking whether she were not a disagreeable person; Emily said she was very odious to those she disliked, but by one or two there was nobody so much loved. It seems strange how anybody can love her. She does not look very formidable; she is middle-sized and dark-complexioned, with a quantity of beautiful hair, and very bright eyes; Emily calls her pretty, but I do not. Miss Thoroton does not like her, and is very harsh to her, and she even dares to retort and defend herself. Miss Smallwood and she are at daggers drawn, and are engaged in little wordy fights ever so many times a-day; the girls seem to think it fun. I should not like to be Miss Alice for anything, but I shall take care not to offend her.

August the ninth. — This is my first Sunday at

school, and this evening we have some rest in the garden, where I am writing upon my knee with a pencil Emily Clay has lent me. On week-days we have scarcely time to breathe between each lesson. We get up at six, and must be in the school-room at seven. Then lessons till eight, prayers, and breakfast. After that, ten minutes out here, and in again to work until twelve. Then dry bread and toast-and-water for luncheon, and half-an-hour's recreation. Lessons again till two: then a walk up Stockbridge-lane, or by the river-side. Back to dinner at four: a quarter of an hour's rest to save our complexions, then to lessons again till half-past seven, tea at eight, prayers after, and to bed at nine; very thankful am I to get to bed too, I am so weary of the incessant hum and work.

Miss Thoroton is a very fashionable-looking lady, but she drops her h's occasionally: she addresses us, collectively and individually, upon the conduct of gentlewomen, and cites to us as shining examples for our imitation certain stars of surpassing brilliance, who formerly illumined the horizon of Stockbridge, but who have since gone in their glory to other spheres. There is one — Maggie Dickson, whom I never will forgive! Her grace, her elegance, her patience, her laborious industry, her talent, her doing her steps up-stairs, her perfect propriety of manner, and her French accent are a continual reproach to me. I believe all the girls hate her sublime and inimitable virtues. Whatever we do ill, Maggie Dickson would scorn to have done: whatever we do well, Maggie Dickson would have done a hundred times better! All the genius and goodness seem to have been absorbed by past generations of school-girls, while we are left lamentably deficient. I ventured to say so

to Miss Alice, and she with her smile replied, "O! we shall be past generations, next half or next year, and shall become shining lights in our turn! When Maggie Dickson was here, Miss Thoroton used to say she was like an over-grown stable-boy, and she was; she came to Stockbridge when I did, and got into as many scrapes as any of us."

This is consolatory, but I do wish Miss Thoroton would allow us to have one little germ of goodness, so that there might be a hope of something sprouting up by-and-by; but she will not. She says my language is made up of the most frightful provincialisms, which never can be, and never ought to be, tolerated in polite society, and she inquires almost daily, where I have been brought up, and to what place I expect to go ultimately, if I continue to persevere in my present evil ways. I'm sure I don't know.

Emily Clay is such a sweet, good, kind creature; she never says an ill word of anybody; not even of that every-day-more-to-be-avoided Miss Alice. Miss Alice spares no one and no thing. She deliberately (and I must acknowledge very amusingly) caricatures us all — teachers, masters, mistress, and pupils indiscriminately. She has a book full of quaint sketches, and somebody says she keeps a locked diary: this is esteemed a great mystery and wickedness, as I suppose mine would be were it known, but so far no one is cognisant of it. I have not even told Emily Clay, and she is my favourite above all the school. Miss Alice does a great many civil offices for me, indeed sometimes I am ashamed to make use of her services, disliking her as I do, but I cannot help myself. Yesterday she had to hear me practise my new piece, and I tried to say I was obliged, but did it

with such a bad grace, that she laughed and said: "You need not thank me; I shall attend to you whether you do or not, and I hate sham!"

September the second. — I scarcely ever get time to write a line in my book now, but I must set down what passed yesterday.

Miss Alice has always had to help me a great deal with my lessons because I am so low in my class, and I thought it was only right (especially as I don't like her) that I should make her some acknowledgment for her services. I wrote to consult Grannie about it, and so, when she and Cousin Jane drove over to see me last week, I asked them to bring a pretty white enamelled work-box from Compton for me to give to her. I never saw her by herself so as to offer it until yesterday afternoon, half-holiday. She was in one of the arbours alone, reading, so I fetched it out of my drawer in the school-room, and carried it to her; I felt shy of presenting it, and looked as awkward as could be when I said, "Miss Alice, here is a little work-box for you, if you will accept it."

She looked up at me in her queer way, but without ever glancing at the box, and replied, "Eleanor Clare, I never accept gifts except from those who love me," and then she went on reading.

I turned scarlet, but I was not going to enter into any protestations of my gratitude, so I left the parcel on the seat and marched off. Miss Alice presently came out of the arbour, but she did not bring the box with her, nor, so far as I observed, did she even glance at it. There it stayed all night, and as it rained heavily, it is almost spoiled; Miss Smallwood brought it in, and asked publicly to whom it belonged. I had never expected

that, and feeling desperately guilty got behind my slate, and feigned not to hear. Miss Alice, however, spoke and said:

"It is a present which Miss Eleanor Clare offered to me, and which I declined."

Miss Thoroton looked up in amazement and stared at both of us, then at the box.

"It was an expensive present for you to buy, Miss Eleanor," said she; "but it shows a good spirit of gratitude, you have given Miss Alice much additional work, but she has no claim on you on that account."

"I wanted to pay her for her trouble," I blundered out stupidly.

"That you cannot do," said Miss Thoroton; "there is no question of payment between Miss Alice and any of the pupils; you are all entitled to her services, and she is entitled to your thanks, but nothing more. If she had chosen to accept the present, offered no doubt in a right spirit, there could have been no objection; but, as the matter stands, I must desire Miss Smallwood to take charge of it until you go home, when she will pack it in your trunk. There is no need to cry, Miss Eleanor."

Yes, that final admonition was to me! I had begun to cry — to cry publicly; all the girls stared and whispered, and even Miss Alice began to look red and vexed. It was just time to go out to walk, and everybody began to move; at last they all went, except Miss Alice and myself, and there I sat at my desk crying like a baby — I could not stop, and for very shame I dropped my face into my two hands: I could have stamped with passion. In a minute, perhaps, I felt Miss Alice lay her hand on my neck, and she said, "Don't be

silly, Eleanor Clare, it is not as if you loved me, and I had rejected your present — then you might cry; but you know you hate me worse than any girl in the school."

I shook her off and replied, "Yes, I do!" so vehemently. I was sorry after I had said it, for all her colour went except two red spots on her cheeks, and her eyes looked strange as if tears had flashed into them; but the next moment she laughed in her old way, and observed that she had known it all along, and did not care. "I don't care," is for ever on her lips.

September the fourteenth. — What tiresome, disagreeable subjects we have to write about! — This week's is, The Four Seasons, invited to dine with Time, dispute which is the most valuable to men. Half the girls are running to and fro in a state of distraction: they cannot borrow from books, and Miss Alice is in one of her lofty moods, and declines to help anybody, or else the common cry when we are in a difficulty over our subjects is, "O! Miss Alice, do give me an idea!" and sometimes she will write us a good half-page.

Ever since that scene about the box she and I have scarcely spoken. I do feel a little bit vexed and ashamed of myself when I remember it, and some of the girls have taken upon themselves to quarrel with me about it. They say I insulted her — I did not intend it, and I don't believe she thinks I did. I fancy often since I began to observe her that she has a heart under her satire, but she takes a great deal of pains to keep it hidden. Emily Clay does not dislike her; indeed, she insists upon it that if she had not been so harshly treated when she was a child and since she came to

Stockbridge, she would have been more affectionate and faithful than any of us. Miss Smallwood is horrid to her, but she never seems to care, and though she is slaving from morning till night, Miss Thoroton scolds her every day. She is dreadfully impertinent sometimes — indeed, she always appears ready-armed for repelling an attack, and such cutting, bitter things she can say! So very different from Emily Clay! she is nice.

September the nineteenth. — Miss Alice has been put into my room, and Emily Clay moved to another. Miss Thoroton said she would not have any clanning in the school, and Emily and I were too much together. Then we are not allowed to be companions in our walks, but each of us is classed with a girl we care nothing about. Now, I call this enough to make us deceitful and underhand! Why cannot we be allowed our natural affections as we are elsewhere? I will walk with Emily, and I will talk with her too, whenever I can, for all the Miss Thoroton's in the universe! Miss Smallwood, too, has taken a spite against us, and if we are together in recreation time, she immediately sends one of us off to the piano or elsewhere. Miss Alice is quite as much vexed as we are, but we have to submit. This is such oppressive hot weather, and we have had ever so many bad thunderstorms lately. I don't like Stockbridge as a place — letting alone its being a school. There is a great, ugly marsh beyond our garden, and it is damp and steamy, so different to dear old Burnbank. Some of the girls are not well, and I am not well either, though I don't in the least know what ails me; I get tired with nothing, and my head aches miserably often, but I don't like to complain.

October the twenty-ninth. — O! what a time I have had of it! And now I am all full of aching bones, and pains, and languors! I can scarcely trail one foot after another, and the least noise almost makes me scream. I have had a rheumatic fever for nearly six weeks, and have suffered so very, very much — it was like being racked. Now I can sit up in the little music-room, and Grannie is staying in the town to be near me. They took great care of me and were very kind. Miss Thornton, Miss Smallwood, Mademoiselle, Emily, and all of them; but it was Miss Alice who nursed me best. The two girls who slept in the other bed were moved, and she and I were left alone for quiet. I don't know how I can have thought all the cruel things of her that I have done ever since I came to Stockbridge until I began to be ill. She is so patient and good. One night when I was the weakest I cried, and made confession to her, and asked her to forgive me. I was so weighed down with the remembrance of what I used to feel against her, that I could not rest until she kissed me. I awoke and found her sitting on the floor, with her face resting against my bed, watching me, and stroking my hand. I knew she had been practising in the drawing-room until after ten, and that she would have to be at her lessons for herself by five, and it pained me inexpressibly to see her wasting her few hours of sleep in guarding me. Since that night I have found her out; she never can be cold and repellent to me again, for I must love her whether she will or no. She did not say very much, but she kept still a long while, and knelt by the bed with her face on my hand, and I could feel it wet with tears. At last she asked me not to talk any more, she could not bear it, and got into her own bed.

I thought at first she was gone to sleep, but by-and-by I heard a sob, and another, and O! how she cried! I thought she would kill herself; I never heard anybody cry so bitterly, or so long. I sat up — move I could not — and prayed her to be calm, but she seemed to have lost all control over herself, and could not cease. I wanted to put my arms about her and comfort her, and to tell her there was one person would love her always, always, but I might as well have been tied to my bed, so utterly helpless was I with pain and weakness.

She fell asleep at length, and so did I, and the next morning she said very quietly, "You must not tell, Eleanor Clare, what a fool I was last night; you see I can bear any amount of scolding and hatred with equanimity, but the moment I get a glimpse of affection I am broken up — it is the hazel divining rod which shows where lie the fountains of tears in me — don't you use it again just yet." And away she went to the school-room.

I feel as if I loved her just now better than any one else in the whole world; she has a kind of power over me which I don't acknowledge in anybody besides: whatever she bade me do I should do it. I like to watch her face as she sits by the window at her frame-work (she gets a dispensation from school business and keeps me company now and then), it changes from that quick vivacity and satirical expression that made me dislike her once to a very placid, mournful look — she has a large forehead and dark eyes, but she looks ill and worn; in fact, I believe she has a great deal too much work for her age and strength. She does twice as much as Miss Smallwood or Mademoiselle, besides learning her

own lessons; she says to me that she never sleeps above an hour at a time, and that this wakeful habit she acquired when she first came to Stockbridge, through a dread of lying too long, and being up late, and not having time for her lessons. She will not talk about herself much, but occasionally I hear a little bit of her former history. She has neither father nor mother, sister nor brother, and she is here to be trained for a teacher.

November the twelfth. — O! I think Miss Smallwood the lowest-minded woman! She took me to task this morning about my infatuated fondness, as she called it, for Miss Alice. She said that when we leave school our social positions will be widely different, and that it would be awkward for me to have her for my intimate friend. I cannot express the utter disgust, the wrath that I felt. I said something violent, too, and for that I was vexed, because it gave Miss Smallwood occasion to point out what she maliciously phrased "a sign of the deterioration of my character through our association." To blame Alice! — that angered me more than ever, and I told Miss Smallwood that she was quite incapable of understanding the beautiful nature of my dearest schoolfellow, to whom I was attached equally by my gratitude and my love. Miss Smallwood looked very red, called me an impetuous silly girl, and threatened to tell Miss Thoroton: whether she has done so or not I neither know nor care, but —

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At this part of the journal there is a blank half page, and the writing is not resumed until two years later, when Eleanor Clare left school: the sudden break-off she then explains.

MEADOWLANDS, *June nineteenth, eighteen hundred and forty-six.* — O! how vividly the sight of my old book, that scrawl, that smeared line, and the avalanche of blots bring back the remembrance of early school-times! Miss Thoroton gave it to me yesterday when I was packing up to leave Stockbridge for good and all; she did not make any remark about the awful moment when she pounced down upon me as I was making the entry which comes to such an abrupt conclusion; she just laid it down and said, "This is your property, Eleanor Clare," and marched off with an air of intense dignity.

I have been reading a few pages — I wonder what has become of Alice, and where she is now — she promised to write to me when she was settled, and she has never done so.

Emily Clay and I are together at Meadowlands, where her father lives: it is a pretty place, but not so pretty as Burnbank. Grannie gave permission for me to pay my visit of a fortnight here before joining her, and afterwards, I suppose, we move to Ferndell. When I was at Meadowlands, last midsummer, Herbert Clay was at home; but now he is away on one of his journeys, and is not likely to come back until Monday. I wish he were here. Meadowlands is rather dull, notwithstanding dear Emily does all she can to amuse me without breaking any of the laws of the establishment. Mrs. Clay is the strangest woman — if she were not Emily's mother, I believe I should say the most unpleasant, tiresome, tyrannical woman I ever saw; she has a set of rules for the guidance of servants, husband, children, and visitors, all equally harsh and equally unrelaxing. How other people support her yoke, I cannot tell, but to me it is insufferable — the order at Stockbridge was anarchy in

comparison. Emily submits with the patience and resignation of an angel, but I often feel tempted to rebel; I should rebel but for grieving her, good soul.

Mademoiselle, who has come for a fortnight, is not so conscientious. She audaciously proclaims to Mrs. Clay's face, "'De stitchwork I dislike, de 'broidery I 'bo-minate, de stocking-darn I cannot abear!" and Mrs. Clay responds, smiling frigidly, "Idleness, mademoiselle, idleness, and nothing else." But mademoiselle folds her hands, yawns in the middle of dreary paragraphs, and suddenly breaks out with irrelevant remarks or suggestions as to the beauty of the day and the propriety of taking some active exercise instead of sitting "sew like mantu-makers in dat penitential dressing-room" — "dat penitential dressing-room," the scene of our labours and dulness, being a prettily-fitted room adjoining Mrs. Clay's bed-room, where she does everything except take her meals, although there are two cheerful drawing-rooms and a capital library down-stairs.

I wish Emily had gone to Burnbank with me instead of my coming to Meadowlands with her, as Herbert is away.

June twentieth. — Herbert Clay is coming home to-morrow, instead of Monday. I am glad! for now, surely, we shall have a drive out somewhere — perhaps to Carlton Lakes; that was a delightful drive we had to Carlton last year when the Brookes were staying here. I should like to go again. I have been at loss to understand what Mrs. Clay was hinting at all this morning while we were "in purgatory;" sometimes, from her tone and glances, I imagined it might be at myself; but, then, her remarks were so plainly irrelevant that I must have

been mistaken. She talked about designing chits of girls with intense asperity, and said once very emphatically, à propos of nothing,

"When Herbert marries, he must have money with his wife; his father can make him no allowance now!"

Emily laughed, and asked if anybody had proposed for her brother, that she was specifying conditions. Mrs. Clay reddened, and said in reply:

"It is well those things should be understood; young girls are apt to deceive themselves as to the actual position of men whom they see in a luxurious home."

Mademoiselle was very wroth, and she has been to me since, indignantly repelling any suspicion that she, Aimée Louise de Chalfont, should have designs matrimonial on the son of any "canaille manufacturier!" I appeased her wrath by pointing out that I as well as herself might be hinted at.

I am so rejoiced that I never let it out at Stockbridge about Ferndell being mine — Miss Thoroton and all of them suppose it to belong to Grannie; but she evidently felt the insult aimed particularly at herself; she was for packing her box and departing à l'instant même, but I prevailed on her to stay. She acceded, threatening to present a visage de glace à ce beau monsieur! Herbert will not be long in thawing the crust if he is as he was, and Mademoiselle's wrath never lasts more than ten seconds at a time — no fear of a quarrel therefore.

June twenty-first. — Of all hateful places, that dressing-room is the most hateful! There have we been toiling the whole of the long sunshiny morning, and now,

at three o'clock, the sky is overcast and threatens rain. We might have gone to Carlton so beautifully if Mrs. Clay would have let us. Herbert came in at half-past ten, saying he had a holiday from the office, and would drive us anywhere we chose to go. Mademoiselle shrieked aloud for joy, and I began to fold up my work, when Mrs. Clay bade us be tranquil, she could not spare us till the afternoon; she really must set her face against such distracted ways.

How poor Emily is to pass her life in this dreary fashion is more than I can tell; she will become as tame and spiritless as a mouse; she is far too yielding and unselfish already. Mrs. Clay tyrannises for the mere love of power. When she had refused us this reasonable pleasure, she ordered Herbert to go off, but he said he had nothing in the world to do; he had made over his work for the day to his father, and so he would wait till we were at liberty. And there he stayed leaning against the side of the door, looking chagrined and uncomfortable, until his mother found him a task to walk into the town to match some wool to work her red parrot with. We have not seen him since, and I do not suppose he went near the wool-shop.

Mrs. Clay treats her son as if he were a little school-boy, although he is nearly of age. It is marvellous how he submits to it. I would not. But there is so much in habit. Mrs. Clay is not actively unkind, but she is like flint, and her character is as tough as leather; she seems to have no sentiments, no emotions, no soft amenities of disposition; I could not love her if I tried for centuries, and I do not think she could love me. I cannot tell why, but she seems to have taken a positive dislike to me just now. She shows it continually.

June the twenty-second. — Last night we had a walk down by the river — Herbert and I, Emily and Mademoiselle. It was almost in the gloaming, and I think I never shall forget that dreary, wild scene. Though, in early spring, the water pours down in a flood, at this season the bed of the river is almost dry; the white stones gleamed ghastly against the low dark lines of wood beyond, and there was a sad moaning undertone in the wind such as I never heard before. Then the trickling flow of the springs amongst the rocky fragments, the rush of the mill-stream, and the stirring of the leaves seemed to deepen the silence; there was a strange effect, too, in the clouds — all purple bars against a golden sky, which reminded me of what some wretched prisoner might feel looking through his grated window at the unattainable liberty beyond. As the currents of air swept down the river-bed, they brought a briny scent as of the sea-shore. I almost expected to see tangle hanging on the stones, and shells lying about.

Herbert and I sat on the bank, while Emily and Mademoiselle strayed further down towards the plantations, and he began to talk about his school-days; I do not think he is happy at home; nobody could be happy so crushed and fettered as he and Emily are. I do not think Mr. Clay observes how tied down his children are; if he did, surely he would alter it; but he evidently regards his wife as the best and cleverest of women — a very proper conjugal sentiment, no doubt, but aggravating if it blinds him to paternal duty.

I wonder what would be the effect of a little steady, passive resistance, or a crisis of rebellion — salutary, most likely. It does annoy me — stirs up, indeed, the

very blackest drop in me — to watch Mrs. Clay's placidly self-satisfied countenance as she contradicts us all, and rules us all, and chafes us all to the limit of human endurance. Her eyes are big and prominent, her features are flat, her mouth is thin-lipped, and when it is dropping pearls of moral sentiments, it opens and shuts like the steel snap of a purse. It was certainly an unaccountable freak of nature to give her two such fine children as Herbert and Emily. Emily is very, very pretty, and Herbert has a noble face and carries his head well; Mademoiselle styles him *Jeune Apollo*, and he certainly has a claim to the comparison, but I would rather call him *Phaëton*, for there is a very considerable element of rashness in him, and, once his mother's sway cast off, he will do some foolish things by way of trying his power. Emily is rather afraid of him, but I should never be that; his heart and principles are sterling both, and will not let him go far wrong.

June the twenty-third. — This little book is my safety-valve: but for it I must break out in some unseemly fashion during those interminable *séances* in the dressing-room. This morning I have stitched my finger as rough as a nutmeg-grater with making coarse baby clothes for a charitable basket. I hope poor folks' babies come into the world with tougher skins than gentlefolks, or else they will have a miserable rasping from those little stiff shirts. Mademoiselle asked if they were for a "*bebi rhinocéros?*" and Mrs. Clay told us that "the offspring of labour must not be trained in luxurious ease!" Herbert came in while we were sewing at the sackcloth garments, and he gave his opinions, too, which made his mother angry, and she forbade him the dressing-room. He looked mischievous as he went out,

as if a spirit of revolt were beginning to burn in his breast. I am wicked enough to wish that it would break out, and as for Mademoiselle she incites him, both by word and act, to set his tyrant at defiance.

June the twenty-fourth. — I must work off a little of my effervescent fidgetiness by scribbling in my journal how the days pass here. Mrs. Clay appears to have set all her faculties to hard labour to devise expedients for thwarting and vexing her children at this juncture. What for, nobody can tell — merely through a natural perversity, I suspect. To-day we have missed a beautiful chance of going to the ruins at Springfield Priory. I have not seen them, and should have enjoyed it, but Mrs. Clay was sure her husband had said he should want the horse this afternoon, and, after all, it turns out that he never mentioned it! I did not think before that she would have invented a story to serve her purpose. Such miserable, paltry ways she takes to annoy first one and then the other; at dinner she would only allow preserved plums to the mould of rice, which nobody but herself likes, though there were both raspberry and strawberry jam on the sideboard. Herbert ventured on a word of remonstrance, and all his mother would say was, she wanted the plums eating up. Mademoiselle thereupon shrugged her shoulders, looked wicked, took an infinitesimal portion of rice and half the dish of plums all to herself, and ate them with great apparent gusto. Mrs. Clay's face was a picture of dismay, and when she saw Mademoiselle about to help herself a second time she warned her that she would certainly be ill; but Mademoiselle smiled benignly, replied that nothing ever disagreed with her, and did not desist until she had, as our hostess desired, "eaten them up." I daresay we

shall see no preserved fruit but plums for all the remainder of our visit.

The pleasantest time we have here is the evening. Mr. Clay is then at home, and he likes to have his wife to himself to read the newspapers to him aloud. Then we four can effect our escape, and we either take a walk down by the river or across the fields towards Springfield. Sometimes we meet Mr. Hugh Cameron, the curate, and he and Emily have a talk. I believe I have discovered a secret about them; I am sure he likes Emily very much, whatever she thinks of him, and I am inclined to suspect she returns his affection, from her careful avoidance of talking about him. They know nothing of it at Meadowlands, anyway, for he is received there very cordially as the curate; but Mrs. Clay is too fond of money to let Emily marry a poor man, and he has only a hundred a-year. Every day I expect Emily to come and say something to me about it. To-night, up in Redbank, Mademoiselle left them to themselves, and when we all went home Emily rushed off to her room without saying a word, and did not come down to tea; I am sure something happened in the walk! I should like to —

June the twenty-fifth. — I was stopped last night by Emily's coming in to me to tell me all about it. Mr. Hugh Cameron made her an offer last night, and she accepted him. He is to see her father to-day. Poor Emily was very white and anxious, but very happy, too. We cannot imagine what her mother will say, but dread disapproval. I think Mr. Clay would consent if left to himself, for he likes Hugh Cameron. Emily will make such a good, quiet, pretty clergyman's wife!

June the twenty-sixth. — All yesterday was a series

of scenes — painful scenes. Mrs. Clay is harder and more unfeeling than I could possibly have conceived; she is an atrocious woman! She behaved most insultingly to Hugh Cameron, and most cruelly to Emily. I never saw or imagined any woman so devoid of proper consideration for others. Emily has been telling me that the first thing she did when she heard of the proposal was to shriek with laughter, as if it were an excellent jest got up for her amusement. Mr. Clay was surprised, but might easily have been induced to consent to the marriage, if his wife had not taken the other side so vehemently. She denounced the curate as a wolf in sheep's clothing, an upstart, a beggar, a designing underling, a miserable poverty-bitten Scotchman, and ended by declaring that if her daughter ever spoke to Hugh Cameron again she would renounce her at once and for ever. Emily was crushed with shame and pain, for he was there all the time, and saw the sordid soul of her mother.

Mr. Clay is ruled by his wife almost as completely as his children are, and when he saw her violent dislike to the match, he just said quietly:

"You see, Emily, it won't do — you must give him up. Mr. Hugh Cameron, you have my respect, but your visits to Meadowlands must cease for the present."

Mrs. Clay added, furiously:

"For ever, sir! do not let your shadow darken our doors again while I live."

Emily said she sat as still as a statue herself, but Hugh Cameron looked savage, and she feared he would break out into some unpardonable retort, for which, in point of family and origin, there is scope enough in the Clay's annals. But he controlled himself, and shook

hands with Emily before her mother's face, and each made some kind of promise, there and then, which Emily regards as an engagement.

When Herbert came in from the office at noon, he had to be told all about it, and he was angry that Emily should be made miserable as she is for any paltry considerations, such as his mother cites. He would have liked her to marry Hugh Cameron, who, if he be poor, is a fine-spirited gentleman, and a very clever man, who will rise in his profession before he is many years older. Herbert thinks that even in a worldly point of view, if no other, the rejection is short-sighted and wrong in the extreme. He told his mother so, and she began to cry hysterically, and invoke maledictions on her children, in a spasmodic way that would have been ridiculous if one had not known the sad cause. Mr. Clay was vexed with Herbert for contradicting his mother, and altogether it was a miserable time. Emily has gone to lie down now, literally worried to exhaustion by her mother's tongue and her own griefs; and Mademoiselle, in a spirit which I feel inclined to laud, has given herself up to the task of boring Mrs. Clay, and keeping her quiet in the dressing-room while Emily has a little rest. There will be revolution in Meadowlands ere long. The small end of the wedge of liberty has been inserted by Herbert; and to-day, my impression is, that he will push it further and further in until the prison-doors of his mother's will are broken wide open — the sooner the better, both for his happiness and Emily's.

June twenty-sixth. — I am going away from Meadowlands immediately. Last night Herbert and I went up Redbank together. Mademoiselle stayed to guard Emily from her mother, and when we returned

we found that an awful storm had been brewing for us while we were gone.

But first I must write what happened on Redbank. I have known since last Midsummer that Herbert Clay liked me better than any one; but to-night he told me he must have me for his wife, or nobody. I am quite sure I love him enough to marry him, because I love him enough to die for him, or, perhaps, what is in the long-run much more difficult, to bear a great many lively annoyances for his sake from his mother. It made me very proud and happy to hear him say he loved me, because he is good and true-hearted: he has no mean suspicions and no worldly vanities. One thing he said amused me, while it gladdened me with the certainty that I was loved for myself alone.

This was it. "I know you have no money, Eleanor, and my mother will make the same objections as she did to Hugh Cameron; but never mind, I shall be one-and-twenty and my own master in September."

I smiled to myself, and thought I would keep my secret, and not tell him about Ferndell. He talked of our living in that pretty little cottage by Brookend, where there are ivy, and roses, and earwigs in such plenty, and I let him have his fancy, thinking how I would surprise him when the time came. But the fact is, I should be far happier, as Herbert Clay's wife, in that tiny cot, than as anybody else's at Ferndell.

We had a delicious hour straying over the Redbank and in the wood, but at last it began to grow dusk, and we said we really must go back. We made the walk as long as we could, but Meadowlands was reached at length, and there, on the door-step, stood waiting for us, armed with all her terrors, Mrs. Clay herself. I am not

like Emily; I don't weep and faint, or else it is impossible to say what might have been the consequences of her opening address. She is a coarse, vulgar-minded woman, or she could not have spoken to any girl as she did to me. "Go in, you forward puss!" was her exclamation, the moment she saw me; "and to-morrow you shall be sent home! I will not have you contriving mischief in my peaceful dwelling, making my daughter rebel, and inveigling my silly son, as I see you are doing!"

Herbert cried out passionately, "Mother!" And she added, in a frightened tone, "Have you been imitating that fool, Emily's example, and seeking a partner without a shilling?" and then she ran screaming into the drawing-room, flung herself on the couch, and behaved like an insane person.

Herbert told me to go away to my own room quietly, he could manage her the best alone, and so I left them. This morning I have seen him again. His father objects to his marrying at all now; and I tell him I will never enter any family except with the consent of its members.

I feel strangely confused — happy and sorry, glad and sad.

The carriage is to take me to Stockbridge directly after luncheon; and I shall get to Burnbank by tea-time. Grannie will be surprised to see me, but more surprised when I tell her what has brought my visit to Meadowlands to such a summary conclusion. I don't feel to care much for Mrs. Clay's rudeness; if she had known of Ferndell she would have been almost down on her knees to me, for she worships money; but I wish Herbert's mother was a woman I

could love. Emily is ill this morning, from the fatigue of yesterday, but she will soon rally; she says she knew Herbert meant to propose to me last night, and feared how it would end. Being in much the same case, we sympathised with each other, and combined to keep up our spirits for better times. I should have liked to leave Meadowlands good friends with everybody, but that cannot be.

Herbert has given me a little ring set with five turquoises, like a forget-me-not, which I am always to wear, and I have given him my plain signet with the blood-stone. We intend to write to each other often.

CHAPTER III.

June twenty-seventh. I am at bonnie Burnbank once more, glad of its peace and quietness and loving ways. Grannie is angry — (a very remarkable frame of mind for her) — very angry, at my treatment at Meadowlands. I have just done all my confession to her, and she is bent on writing to Mrs. Clay, but I shall try to persuade her not. Old Mr. Clay shook hands with me very kindly when I left, but his wife would not even see me. Emily fretted, and Herbert drove me down to Stockbridge to meet the train. We consider ourselves, and his family consider us engaged, but there is to be no thought of our marrying at present, or for years to come. This makes me look on life with strangely different eyes; so much is accomplished, that there is no scope for the fancies and visions which make up some girls' youth. I am glad it is so; now I must set myself some work to do. Uncle Henry comes over soon to talk

about our settling at Ferndell; but I have begged Grannie not to speak to him of Herbert and Meadowlands. Considering how matters are, I think the engagement had better be kept quiet. I hate being speculated upon and watched, as I should be were it known — especially so much as there is to know.

June twenty-ninth. Mary Jane Curling arrived here this afternoon, overflowing with happiness and consequence, to announce her approaching marriage with old Sir Simon Deering. It is a great thing for the family — the connection, I mean; for Sir Simon is supposed to have influential friends, who will help the Curling boys forward in their professions. She has asked me to be one of the bridesmaids on the occasion, and Grannie says I cannot decline without giving offence; so I suppose I must; but if my choice were given me, I certainly should not. I have been over to see Miss Lawson and Betsy since tea, and found them much as they used to be; both reverted to their chairs, which I gave them when I came into possession of Uncle Robert's property. What a dreadful burden I found that property in idea then! Now, I am quite used to its possession, and bear it meekly enough. I don't think, by the bye, if I were to lose it to-morrow, the loss would afflict me.

Mrs. Lake, who knows some people in the neighbourhood of Stockbridge who are acquainted with all the Clay family, was asking me about them yesterday in an inquisitive anxious manner, which caused me to suspect that she had heard a distorted version of recent events at Meadowlands, so I told her what had really occurred.

She felt about it much as Grannie feels; that is to say, very indignant; and besides, she did not refrain

from insinuating that the heiress of Ferndell might look higher in the world than to the son of a manufacturer. Mrs. Lake does not know Herbert Clay, or she would not say that. I might have answered that once a gentleman, always a gentleman would apply to him, but I refrained. To compare him with such men as young Curling, Freddy Price, or Sir Edward Singleton, seems a positive degradation. But it vexes me to feel that it is possible for anybody to look down upon him. If I could once show him here — his fine countenance, his intelligent, good countenance — no one would ever think of speaking slightly of him again! But I see no chance of that while our engagement is unsanctioned.

I had a long letter from him to-day, chiefly written the night of the day I left Meadowlands. He still harps on the little rustic cottage, and says it has taken such a fast hold on his imagination, that he must go forthwith and examine its interior capabilities of comfort. He hopes I do not mind grandeur!

I almost wish now I had told him about Ferndell at once; but as I did not do it personally, I shall not tell him by letter — that would seem to attach more importance to it than it deserves. I am rather afraid of how the intelligence may strike him. He is a proud man, and I remember hearing him speak once of a person who had his money through his wife, as a fettered being, who had sold his liberty for ready cash. At the same time he declared that he would never be indebted to his wife for anything!

But it is of no use to fret myself with a thousand vain fancies. All will come right in the end; I know I was not born to be miserable. Once, Mary Jane Curling would tell me my fortune by the cards, and she said

I should be one of the most lucky people in the world, both as regards love and money. It would be nonsense to say I believe her, but I really was pleased, and very much pleased too; I like to look forward to bright things.

July tenth. Uncle Henry has been and is gone again. He and I had one thorough good battle. It seems some meddlesome person had told him about Herbert Clay, and he was so insulting on the matter that I said, to him, there were two or three points on which I would bear no interference, and this was the chief. I would marry where and whom I chose. He insisted upon it that mine was a mere girlish whim, and that when I had seen a little more of the world I should be ashamed of my first fancy. Evil befall me if I am ashamed of Herbert!

July seventeenth. Mary Jane Curling was married yesterday. Lady Deering, I must call her henceforward, with becoming respect. I went over the day before, all the company, or nearly all, being assembled. Anna Curling, the two Prices, and the two Coopers and myself were bridesmaids. None of Sir Simon's family were present; indeed, it is a fact generally known, that this marriage has given the greatest dissatisfaction. He has a son five-and-forty years old, and seven grandchildren, two of them as old, if not older than Mary Jane. She was in the most exuberant spirits, and bade us all address her in private as Grandmama. It would be affectation to try to think that she loves Sir Simon. He is a very sour, ill-tempered person from his face, and as jealous of Mary Jane as he can be. It was very wrong, I know, but I could not forbear smiling as they stood together in church. It was a sunshiny morning which

dragged every contrast forcibly into light. She looked broad and blooming — very blooming; her eyes rolled more, and her teeth glittered more than usual even. Then he trembled as if he had an ague fit, and, by some unlucky accident, the brown wig with which it has recently pleased him to hide his bald pate, had got pushed a little too high up on his head, and showed the poor white hairs cut close to his neck. One of Mary Jane's Scotch cousins remarked to me that he wasna' a bonnie man at a'. And she is right there.

After the ceremony there was a grand breakfast and the usual amount of speechifying. Sir Simon (it was very bad taste in him) had chosen young Sir Edward Singleton for his best man; and, whether his tender recollections were too much for him, or he is always so tongue-tied, a very miserable oration he made for the bridesmaids. He is much improved in appearance since he came from abroad; he has lost his clownish air and gait, and looks, what he never seemed likely to do, a very fine gentleman indeed. He has a little affected insouciant manner, which would become him better if, instead of being six feet two in height, he were a little man; then he speaks with a lisp and drawl, and nervously twirls his bit of watch-chain, or pushes up his tawny hair until he looks as fierce as a lion. Mary Jane would have found him a much more suitable mate than her decrepit Sir Simon. I never saw her countenance change but once, and that was when in his speech he made an awkward allusion to past events. She looked terrified and Lady Singleton went ghastly white. Sir Simon said, "Eh! What? what?" and there was a little titter as Sir Edward recovered himself and stammered out a few more broken phrases, and dropped into his

chair like a man exhausted with some tremendous physical exertion. Everybody felt relieved; for it was no secret why Lady Singleton was so anxious to get her son away from Deerhill two years ago. For my part I don't think it would have been a bad match for him, all things considered. She is a dashing, self-possessed woman, and would have set the estate to rights much better than Lady Singleton is capable of doing. After the breakfast we had to collect all the old white satin shoes that could be found, and when the happy couple drove off, a shower was pelted after them with hearty good will. One slipper was sent with such true aim, that it knocked off the postilion's hat, and another struck Mary Jane's maid. After they were gone, Captain Curling would have some games and races amongst the villagers who had assembled in the paddock below the house; and, as the day was fine, we got through it well enough, and without weariness. Lady Singleton joined me as I was going up the wood with Anna Curling. Anna was glad to return to the crowd, so Lady Singleton and I took a walk together. She is what people combine to call a very charming, fascinating, worldly woman; and so I think she is. She flatters with her tongue, as if the practice were nothing new to her, and also as if there were something to be gained by it. She said some amiable things to me that made me feel angry and ashamed, yet I scarcely knew how to check her, there is so much earnestness of manner mingled with her plausibility and smoothness. She clasps her hands enthusiastically and says, "My dear, you must believe me; I always speak the literal truth — sometimes the too literal truth, and give offence; for you must know I have a reputation for making the harshest judgments"

— a reputation I never heard of before, though it may be a fact, nevertheless. There is a snakiness about her that I distrust. After she had catechised me closely, and uttered as many graceful compliments as I might be supposed capable of bearing at one time, she turned the conversation upon Sir Edward. He was the dearest son — the best, the most unselfish, the most affectionate of sons. So thoughtful for her; so generous to his tenants; so staid and methodical in his own personal expenses. I could have asked Lady Singleton Miss Thoroton's celebrated question, "Where she expected to go to for telling so many palpable falsehoods?" but I did not; for, after all, she is a woman whom one had better call friend than enemy. I dare say she can slander as well as she can flatter.

After our walk she had her carriage and drove home to Deerhill, but only to return in the evening to the ball. A great many more people assembled for that than had come for the breakfast. The scene was very gay, and I really enjoyed it. My first ball — that was a ball! I had partners enough; but Sir Edward Singleton was the person who chose to distinguish me the most — indeed, he never danced with anybody else. His mother incited him to the disagreeable exhibition, I know; but if she thought that, because I am young, I should be gratified by attracting the attention of the chief person there, she was lamentably mistaken. I hate to attract any particular notice, and then Sir Edward is not so intelligent or amusing as he would fain appear. In fact, I was exceeding weary of him. I wonder how all these people — who lay themselves out to pay me so much deference — would treat me if I lost Ferndell to-morrow? In a very different style, indeed, I am quite sure.

July the twenty-fourth. — This morning I had a letter again from Herbert; it has made me restless and unhappy. What can he mean by saying I have not shown confidence in him? Can it refer to Ferndell? That is the only explanation I can discover. It would have been better to tell him myself when I was at Meadowlands, and I regret now that I did not do so. The best way to make amends will be to write at once and confess — no easy matter!

August the first. — According to the post, I might have had a letter from Herbert yesterday morning, or again this morning, but none has come. Perhaps he is away on one of his business journeys, and has missed mine. The Singletons — Sir Edward especially — are very diligent in their visits at Burnbank. I am as stiff and disagreeable as I can be, because it is very easy to perceive that he and his mother are laying vigorous siege to Ferndell, and I by no means intend the fortress should capitulate on any terms. Grannie encourages them, and occasionally throws out hints about the Clays; Cousin Jane asks, satirically, after “the commercial traveller” whenever I receive a letter, and yesterday, feigning ignorance of what Herbert is, she said, “Eleanor, is your chosen a sort of bagman, or packman, like Wandering Willie, who comes to sell the damsels’ gowns at the back-door?” I said he was what our grandfather was, and her father is, a cotton-spinner, — neither more nor less; and she held her peace at once.

It is so silly to look at people’s progenitors instead of themselves. I never can clearly understand on what principle it is done. I do not pretend to undervalue having come of a good stock, as the saying is. I should, for instance, feel ashamed and angry to hear that my

great grandfather had been hanged for sheep stealing; but I should feel just as much ashamed and just as angry if I were told that — standing in the class of gentlemen — he had been shot in a duel for cheating at play. Happily he was neither. He was a decent mechanic — a West Riding of Yorkshire man — very stubborn, very persevering, and very honest — qualities that I hope he has transmitted to his descendants. The Clays are of just the same class. Old grandfather Clay was a quarryman, and worked as such in the neighbourhood of Stockbridge. He married a beautiful factory-girl, and then was himself engaged in one of the great mills. For some improvement that he suggested in the machinery, his master gave him a good situation, and afterwards a share in the business. He and his wife had a large and fine family. All the sons are cotton-spinners, and the three daughters — beautiful as their mother — married cotton-spinners. In fact, all the family is cotton. Herbert and Emily have inherited the personal beauty and fine moral character which raised their grandfather and grandmother from a low to a high position — yes, a high position! for even yet the kindliness and liberality of the first Clays are proverbial in Stockbridge, and the present family inherit the respect they won.

Now, I cannot be persuaded that Herbert Clay is not a better man and better gentleman than Sir Edward Singleton, whose father's baronetcy was an election bribe; whose education was neglected at home, and finished abroad amongst the worst company. I suppose it would be a shame even to know the life that young man has led since he came into the property. I have heard it hinted at years ago, when he wanted to marry Mary Jane Curling, and I have not forgotten it — I am glad

I have not. I can see very plainly — though I choose to appear not to see — that even good old Grannie would like me to marry Sir Edward Singleton better than Herbert Clay. As if there was anything in that man to win a girl's love! I revolt from his idea; ever since his visits here have become frequent, and their object palpable, I have experienced a species of loathing for him which is indescribable. I should be very glad if he were never again to come to Burnbank while we stay.

About the middle of September we move to Ferndell. The preparations are being made now. I wish I knew how Herbert received the intelligence my last letter conveyed to him.

August the second. — No letter from Herbert, again, this morning. What can it mean? Surely he is not angry!

August the third. — No letter.

August the fourth. — Nothing again this morning! It is not kind in Herbert. He might be perfectly sure that my anxiety to hear from him would be intense. Cousin Jane teases me mercilessly about my "faithless bagman," as she persists in calling him, and wants to know when his professional travels may be expected to bring him to Burnbank, as she intends to patronise him to the extent of ten shillings worth of cheap calico. If he only would come, this silly, vexing talk would be set at rest for ever.

Sir Edward Singleton inflicted himself upon us this morning for full two hours — such an incubus! I feel very dull to-day, and cannot help harassing myself with idle specula —

August the fifth. — While I was writing in my

journal, yesterday afternoon, Mary Burton came up and knocked at the door, saying:

"If you please, Miss Eleanor, there is a gentleman who wishes to see you. I have showed him into the library;" and she handed me in a card, "Mr. Herbert Clay."

I ran down-stairs in an instant, full of delight and happiness; but there was soon an end to all that! He received me frigidly. Oh! I can't describe how it was, or how I felt! Only I sat down, and all my colour went as I looked in his face. He began to speak in a stiff, constrained way, about that being the earliest opportunity he had had of seeing me since he had received my letter, and before he had time to say three sentences, Cousin Jane appeared — curiosity brought her. I introduced them, and the next moment Grannie, having learnt from Mary Burton who was come, entered too. She looked her loftiest and sat down opposite to Herbert, as if she intended to stay as long as he did. Cousin Jane was laughing internally, for she had discernment enough to see that she had interrupted a very critical interview, and having possessed herself of a book she went away. Grannie made a few general observations on the state of the atmosphere, and then plunged into the main subject by observing that Mr. Herbert Clay's visit was an unexpected honour — her tone implied that it was also undesired. Herbert kept his temper wonderfully, and his countenance too; as for me, there was nothing to do but to sit it out as well as I could. I saw Grannie meant that any explanation there might be to make should pass in her presence. I held my peace, and Grannie said that she had understood from me he sought an alliance with her family, but that his strongly

objected to it; for her part, her objections were equally strong — stronger possibly than any Mr. and Mrs. Clay entertained.

Herbert passed that over, and came straight to the pith of what he had to say, and said it with a manly pride and feeling which made my heart thrill. "When I asked Eleanor Clare to be my wife I did so under the impression that I should be able to raise her to an independent home, — that, in fact, she was without fortune, and that I could make her happy. Since then, I have learnt from herself that her position is different, — changes our relations to each other entirely, —"

"Our positions are what they always were," I interrupted, but Grannie stopped me with a warning look, and he went on as if I had never spoken, — "and this being the case, I am ready, if she desire it, to release her from her engagements."

I was startled, shocked inexpressibly, and the blood flew into my face; but, standing up, I replied with as much pride and dignity as I could muster, "I accept your resignation, sir."

I did believe, until he said that, his love for me would have outweighed all other considerations; but it seemed that I deceived myself.

Grannie added, "I must say that my grandchild has replied as is most fitting she should reply to your curt rejection of her." Herbert attempted to speak, but she would not permit him. "It is a rejection, sir, — it is an insult! If I had been in your place I would have known how to value her better than to lose her for a scruple of pride!"

To think of Grannie saying that! and so fierce she looked! Herbert would have his word now, and said a

few phrases which showed all he felt; but Grannie did not take them in their right sense; so I said, "Fear no misunderstanding from me, Herbert Clay, I know your sentiments. You will give your wife all, and accept from her nothing but herself — it may be very chivalrous;" and then I felt sarcastic and bitter, and miserable, and Grannie gave him a haughty, "Good day to you, sir," and he departed. Did I not always say that Fern-dell would be the plague and sorrow of my life? but I did not think it would take this turn of all others. So that is over and done with — Love's young dream!

August the sixth. — Last night I felt angry, proud, and stung to the quick. It was honourable in Herbert Clay, but somehow I would rather he had not found it so easy to give me up, that he had proved more selfish in fact; but that would not have been like himself. There has been a total silence on the subject since he went. Grannie is relieved, probably, but she will not show it; and Cousin Jane has given up teasing. I could not bear it. I don't feel disposed to fret or seek retirement for what has happened; my spirit is up and resentful. I wonder how Herbert bears it, for, say what he will, I know he loves me. We are a pair of proud young fools! Perhaps he expected me to say that I would not desire our engagement broken.

I make a vow to myself I will write his name in my book no more. I will not be a pining love-sick maiden for anybody. To-morrow night I shall dine at Deerhill with Grannie, and flirt with Sir Edward.

August the thirtieth. — I have a mind to score out that last sentence; but it would show if I did, so it may even stand as it is — the wilful suggestion of a very miserable moment. I did dine at Deerhill, but I did

not flirt with Sir Edward. I cannot do as other girls do in that way. I am not a born flirt. There is a troublesomely strong element of adhesiveness in my composition which makes me cling fast to one idea and one affection. We have hastened our preparations for going over to Ferndell. I want to be there now, to get into the midst of fresh scenes, and to begin some of my manifold duties as squiress of a considerable village. Mrs. Curling suggested to me a trip abroad, but I could not enjoy that now; I want to get into quiet routine work. I feel as steady and as phlegmatic as an old horse in a mill.

FERNDELL, *October the twenty-fifth.* — We have been here nearly six weeks, and in all that time my book has laid on my desk unopened. There is nothing particular to chronicle; it seems as if I could write most fluently about my feelings, and for the present my feelings have got a rest. One cannot go on suffering pain and regret for ever; after a while they lose their prominence in the day's experience, and gradually fade and fade until they only return in melancholy moments — in the night-time perhaps — when we lie awake, longing for the sleep that will not come.

Ferndell is beautiful — very beautiful. There are beechwoods where the crisp leaves are falling already. I like to walk in the open glades, — the sun falls in broad yellow layers over the turf, and the birds up in the branches sing as I never heard birds sing elsewhere; there must be thousands of them!

I am trying to become a practical and useful person in my generation, and in that view have given orders for rebuilding and enlarging the village schools, and

attaching thereto a master's house. I cannot do all I should like to do yet, for I want nearly three years of being of age, and uncle Henry does not seem to think he can fulfil his duty as guardian correctly without thwarting some of my reasonable desires, which he stigmatises as Quixotic extravagancies. My own personal wants are so few that I shall be at a loss to spend my income unless I give it away.

Dear Grannie does so enjoy Ferndell! She proposed yesterday to invite some company, but I only feel disposed to ask Mrs. Lake and Betsy Lawson, and her sister. So I shall ask them next week.

January the sixth, eighteen hundred and forty-seven. — Christmas at Ferndell ought to be a merry time, but it was not. Outwardly there was rejoicing, but inwardly to me it all lacked heart. From time immemorial the tenants on the estate and the hall servants have been accustomed to a dinner and ball at this season, and though I care little enough for such meetings, it was best to keep up the custom; so I filled the house with people for the occasion, gave them plenty to eat and drink, and let them divert themselves after their own tastes. Sir Edward Singleton and his mother came, and Sir Simon and Lady Deering. Mary Jane makes the utmost of her new dignity, and conducts herself with a punctilious watchfulness over the old man's whims that is really very creditable to her: she has accomplished already what nine women out of ten could not have done, — namely reconciled herself to his family.

Common report — false-tongued jade that she is — has been making up a match for me with Sir Edward. Lady Deering asked me if it were true. I denied it emphatically, and told her it was not true, or ever likely

to be true. I trust she will consider it her duty to carry my words to Lady Singleton's ears, so that she may abandon her fruitless pursuit of me; it is she who really does all the courting, Sir Edward stands by, looking vast and handsome, and occasionally dropping a gem of inanity from his tongue, — anything so big ought not to be so foolish, so intensely vacant. The poor giant has not yet come out of his bewilderment for Lady Deering, and he confided to me yesterday that he thought her the finest woman in all creation. She was at the moment showing to very large advantage: her crimson velvet dress enhanced the whiteness of her arms and neck, and her complexion was a shade or two less glowing than ordinary. Sir Edward suggested that Rubens was the man to paint her; no one with a more timid brush could do her justice; and I quite agree with him there.

Some of our party would get up private theatricals, but they failed through lack of brilliant actors; so there was dancing each night, and that the young people enjoyed. I get a good deal rallied for my sober way, and am asked why I do not do this, and why I do not do that, for the embellishment of Ferndell. I don't care for the grand echoing state-rooms, and never enter them except when I have company. Grannie and I use the garden apartments: dining-room, drawing-room, and book-room, all furnished en suite, and as cosy and unpretending as Burnbank. But my favourite spot is this little eyrie in the tower — bedroom and sulky. I brought Lady Deering up, and she was bewildered by my monastic taste, — wondered what it meant. I chose the locality for its quietness, and the beautiful prospects from the four windows. I can see across the wolds for miles, and over the deer-park and beech-woods. Some-

times on a very clear day I can also distinguish an opaque cloud hanging low down in the west, — a cloud issuing from those Stockbridge mill chimneys. It is very silent up here, but not lonely, and it is furnished according to my own whim; a Turkey carpet on the stone-floor, a heavy old table with drawers, some plain comfortable easy-chairs, a couch, and dwarf book-cases fitted into the walls, and crimson draperies for the windows, — not very hermit-like, I think. Indeed, I like personal comfort and luxury in a quiet way: glitter and grandeur oppress me. Here I do my business, make my plans, and dream what I will do some day by way of benefiting my fellow-creatures. I spend a great deal of time in dreaming.

In all this time I have never heard from Alice; I cannot conceive what has become of her; it is now eighteen months since she left me at Miss Thoroton's, promising to write, — I don't understand her failing in her promises.

January the tenth. — Sir Edward Singleton is done with at last. He rode over from Mr. Napier's at Burley this morning, proposed in due form, and departed a rejected man. I am relieved that is over, as it had to happen; now, I shall be delivered from the smooth flatteries of his mother and the burden of his presence wherever I go. He professed a good amount of lumbering, honest affection, but as I knew privately he cared not a sou for me, I did not commiserate him in the smallest degree. When he was gone, Grannie came up to me curious and anxious. She was disappointed at the issue, and said she had thought for some time past that I was relenting towards the poor gentleman, and asked if I did not mean to reconsider it. I said No, decidedly No!

February the fifteenth. — Cousin Jane is going to be married to Mr. Scrope, the rector at Burnshead. This will be, what folks call, a most suitable and equal marriage, and I am glad of it; even Cousin Henry, who is generally so more than hard to please, expresses himself fully satisfied. Jane proposes, half in jest and half in earnest, that, as a matter of course, I shall make them a wedding present. I shall in my munificence give them a new church — why should I not? Whatever sum Wastelands, that Johnson wants to buy for the erection of his new mill and cottages, brings in, shall go to Burnshead for the church. Uncle Henry says that with the fine timber upon it, and the water-power, it is worth from four to five thousand pounds for building land. I wish it were a mile or two further from Ferndell; I like Stockbridge at a distance, but have no desire to see it walking up to my park gates. Jane is to be married in April.

May the twentieth. — To-day we laid the foundation-stone of Burnshead church. It is to be built upon a beautiful knoll at the back of the village, which it will overlook. The grave-yard is to slope down to the pasture-fields, which are divided from it by the beck. I intend to be buried there myself some day. I stayed with Grannie at the rectory for a week, and enjoyed it. Since Jane was married, she has quite lost her fussy old-maidish ways, and has bloomed into a very pleasing, sensible, active wife. Her house, old and inconvenient as it is, looks exquisitely clean and pretty; but, I think, I must give them a new rectory too. Mr. Scrope is a very good man, and sets immense store by Jenny, as he calls her. I have a nook in my eye, not far from the church, where the new rectory would look charming;

the garden is almost ready made, for the trees there are beautiful. Next year I will improve the schools.

September the seventeenth. — Ferndell is loveliest in the early autumn; there can be nothing lovelier than the view from the south window of my tower. There are the red and yellow tints in the woods, and the golden fields of ripe corn still uncut. Yesterday I rode for the first time since we left Burnbank, and I took the Stockbridge road; I wanted to see with my own eyes if all the reports we hear about the people are true. It was perfectly quiet: indeed, there were fewer idle folks about than usual. Burton told me they met on the Marsh every evening; but I could not go so far, because Grannie would have fidgeted if I had been long away, and within six miles of Stockbridge I returned home. Mr. Scrope tells me that the reports are much exaggerated, — they always are in these cases.

December the seventh. — The strike, which was only partial in the autumn, is now general throughout Stockbridge; it is very lamentable, for the people cannot but suffer, and suffer greatly in this inclement season. I pity the people, and the masters too; both have their grievances, but I do think they might be accommodated readily enough, but for these speechifying demagogues who, while calling themselves the working man's friends, are in fact his bitterest enemies. They ought to be drummed out of the county with all possible speed and ignominy! I heard one of them myself yesterday holding forth on the Marsh to several hundreds of hollow-faced men and haggard women. It was pinching cold; but they stood patiently, drinking in his rant as if it was gospel truth. Burton begged me not to go near, lest I should be insulted; but I rode round to where I could

hear the speaker, and nobody took any notice of me; I supposed that I must be personally known to many amongst the crowd. The fellow saw me — a low, black-browed man he was — nature had writ him villain on his face, — and he forthwith launched into a philippic against “the purse-proud aristocracy, who ride over the poor man’s neck and filch ’is bit of bread from ’is lips.” Burton renewed his entreaties that I would come away, but it was such a novelty to be abused that I stayed to hear it. After a few general denunciations which seemed to take well enough, the man thought to point a moral personally at me, and with a curiously sarcastic air spoke of “snorting horses and chariots, and pampered menials in the livery of slaves; acres of corn growing for the wastry of one fine lady, while their children fainted for bread.”

There was a hiss in the crowd, whether for me or for him I neither knew nor cared; I sat still waiting for what would come next. This came. The tub-orator proceeded to say that I had come there to gloat over their misery, and the hiss rose to a yell; as soon as that ceased a voice called out in the crowd, “Thou lees! keep a civil tongue i’ thee head. Yon’s Miss Clare fra’ Ferndell?” and one or two of those nearest to me touched their caps respectfully. Burton brought tidings this morning that this famous orator had been beaten by the mob, and ducked in Blackmoss for making offensive remarks about the Clay family, who are at present the only mill-owners in Stockbridge who are not out of favour. The man had not learnt his lesson thoroughly, and struck out right and left at popular and unpopular with a very unlucky impartiality. I must say that I

was gratified to learn that he had met with condign punishment at the hands of his worshippers.

May the twenty-ninth, eighteen hundred and forty-eight. — It is a very rare thing for me now to take out my old journal; I forget it, and it lies by for months, until I see some one who recalls it to my memory, or something happens of which I want to keep a record. I have been over at Burnshead to the Scropes, who have just got settled in their new house: the old one is occupied by the curate, who came at Christmas, and who should this curate be but Mr. Hugh Cameron! I was glad to meet him again, but sorry to find that he had no preferment. He has no patron to give him anything, and the church cannot always provide as amply as they deserve for her sons. He spoke of Emily Clay with a melancholy smile, and said they lived in hope — that is something.

This morning two gentlemen waited upon me from Stockbridge, to ask if I would permit the working people to come out to Ferndell for a holiday — give them the run of the park and woods for the day. I consented, on condition that no intoxicating drinkables should be sold in the grounds, and they promised to see to the stipulation being observed.

June the third. — The Stockbridge people's holiday went off satisfactorily. As early as six in the morning they began to arrive, but the men had put up the flags and decorations over night, and manufactured an arch of evergreens over the gateway, with "Welcome" in letters of daffodils, so that all was in readiness. I am told that there were as many as six thousand, but as the day was brilliantly fine, and they scattered themselves over the

woods and park in detachments, I should not myself have guessed them at more than half the number. They brought with them two bands of music, and in the afternoon there was a dance on the level field near the cricket-ground; some of the young men played cricket. I had out the pony-carriage, and drove Grannie about to see them; she was rather alarmed at first, but when she saw how perfectly quiet and well-conducted everybody was she enjoyed it.

Some of the neighbouring gentry are in high dudgeon at my bringing what they style "the riff-raff" into the country; but there was no "riff-raff;" they were, as a whole, the respectable class of mechanics and factory folks. I confess that I did expect myself to find some destruction amongst the trees, but there is none; and as for the grass — nature and the first shower will restore that.

June the twenty-seventh. — Next month there is to be a great bazaar at Stockbridge towards defraying the expenses of rebuilding the old church. I have been requested to provide a stall. It is a thing I do not relish at all; I would much rather give them a couple of hundred pounds, and have done with it; but this, it seems, would not do so well; Lady Mary Vernon and I are therefore to join.

The venerable rector of Ashby-on-the-Hill died last week, and I have given the living to Hugh Cameron; it is worth four hundred a-year, so now he and Emily Clay can marry and live happily ever afterwards. When I was in Stockbridge last Monday I met Emily, but as I was in the carriage and she was walking on the pavement with several ladies, she did not see me. She

looked prettier than ever; her face was always refined and full of intelligence, and years have improved it.

August the seventeenth. — The bazaar is over. Lady Mary Vernon was a most active saleswoman all the three days, but I did not fill my post very well. The heat and bustle were almost too much for me, and I was glad when the whole affair came to a successful conclusion. Mrs. Clay from Meadowlands had the next stall to ours, and as Emily was with her we had the opportunity of several talks; she thanked me very fervently for Hugh Cameron, and whispered that her mother had at last been persuaded to consent, and they were to be married in September.

There was a beautiful dark-haired girl with Emily. I inquired of Lady Mary who she was, and she told me her name was Hargrave, and she was going to marry one of the Clays, but whether Herbert Clay or his cousin Frank she did not know; she believed Herbert. I could not help watching her with some curiosity: she appeared an animated creature, and had great success with buyers of fancy things, especially with the gentlemen. Lady Mary wished several times that we had her to help us, and she had to scold me more than once for not pushing and pressing as she did. For the last day we hired one of the German girls from the Berlin-wool shop, and then we managed much better.

Mr. Herbert Clay was to and fro in the room often during the three days: he came to his mother's stall, and talked to that pretty Miss Hargrave for a long while one afternoon towards the hour for closing, and waited to take her away. I heard her whisper, "Stop for me, Herbert;" so he sat down on a chair with his back to us, and stayed till she was ready to go. He bowed to

Lady Mary in passing, but I don't think he saw me, for I was behind the drapery that divides our stalls. He looks several years older and better than he used to do, for he has lost the boyish air he had. Lady Mary said he was a fine young fellow, and that since he brought the strike to that happy ending he was very highly thought of in the county. Some one wished him to stand for Stockbridge at the last election, but he declined: his father's health is failing, and he must supply his place in the business. I was not introduced to Miss Hargrave, and Emily, in all her conversations, never alluded to her. On the closing day of the bazaar, Mrs. Clay condescended to acknowledge me with a bow: she must have seen me before, but our eyes never met, and neither could possibly feel disposed to make any advance to the other. She is become very grey, and begins to look quite the old woman, but the tyrannical, domineering spirit is not dead in her.

Miss Thoroton, Miss Smallwood, Mademoiselle, and all the young ladies paid our stall a visit, and poor Miss Thoroton observed that it was the proudest day of her life in which she learnt that she had had the training of the heiress of Ferndell; then she pretended to scold me for the reticence that had kept it a secret all the while I was at school, and ended by inviting me to renew Stockbridge reminiscences by going to dine with her. I could not accept then, but I promised to go some day next week, and hear all her gossip about my former companions — perhaps she will be able to tell me something about Miss Alice.

August the twenty-fourth. — Oh, I was sadly shocked yesterday! It was one of the furthest things from my thoughts that Alice should be dead, and I have been all

along reproaching her for never writing to me. So quietly as Miss Thoroton told it, too — so unfeelingly.

I said, as she was talking on and on about one girl and another, for whom I never cared, "But can you tell me what has become of Miss Alice?" and she replied, "My dear, did you not know? She has been dead these two years, and more! When was it Miss Smallwood — in March or April?"

"I believe it was in August," said Miss Smallwood.

I was so painfully struck, that for several minutes I could not speak at all, and Miss Thoroton went on: —

"We heard of her death by the merest chance: it was in this way. When she left us, I could not reconcile it with my conscience either to find her a situation or recommend her to any family (her conduct had been so very insubordinate while with us), but she obtained, by her own arts (she was a talented girl, and there were those who liked her), a situation in a clergyman's house, as governess to two children. She was with them eighteen months, and they conceived a true respect for her, and if she had stayed with them she might, in time, have quite redeemed herself, but there was some love affair, some disappointment which affected her mind for awhile. When she recovered she was possessed with a desire to travel on the continent, and engaged herself as companion to a lady going thither. This lady fell ill of an infectious fever at Brussels, and it was in nursing her Miss Alice contracted the disease of which she died there. Who was it told us the whole story, Miss Smallwood — was it not the Drakes when they came from their wedding tour?"

Miss Smallwood thought it was the Drakes.

"It could not have been anyone else — they were

in Brussels at the time. It seemed that Mrs. Hardfast was just recovered when Miss Alice fell sick, and she left her alone at the hotel where they had been staying, and almost without money — a very inconsiderate, and, I may say, cruel act — however, Miss Alice sank rapidly, and died there. Who buried her, Miss Smallwood, do you recollect?"

"It was a charitable English gentleman, the Drakes said, but I cannot call to mind his name. Was it a Sir Edward Singleton — I really believe it was? I know it was a baronet, a wild young fellow who was staying at the inn, and who had been struck by her pretty face — yes, he paid for her funeral, and I must say that his heart was in the right place, wherever his wits might be."

And the two passed their comments on other circumstances which now revived in their minds without an atom of commiseration, till the tears began to drop from my eyes at the remembrance of how good she was to me.

Miss Thoroton expressed surprise at my feeling the news so deeply, and said, by way of consolation, "My dear Miss Eleanor, it was a mercy she was taken: she had such an intolerable spirit that she never could have done any good in the world!"

I asked where she was buried.

"Was it in the cemetery at Brussels, Miss Smallwood, or was it at Laeken?"

Miss Smallwood was not certain, but she thought Laeken.

"I can learn by writing to the Drakes, if you wish it, dear Miss Eleanor," Miss Thoroton proposed.

I thanked her, but said I could obtain direct information from Sir Edward Singleton — I did not think there was that goodness and generosity in him. Poor

Alice! to live and die so friendless! oh, if I had but known!

CHAPTER IV.

SEPTEMBER *the first.* — This morning I had an answer to my letter from Sir Edward Singleton, and some few details concerning Alice. He says she was not neglected in her illness and death, for though Mrs. Hardfast left her, there was an Englishwoman, resident in Brussels (a teacher, he believes, named Mervin), who was with her to the last, and who followed her coffin to the grave. She is buried at Brussels, and there is a cross put up as on the other tombs, and a slab with her name and the date of her death. There is then no tribute of love or gratitude that I can pay her — strangers have done all! I do not remember ever feeling so saddened, so depressed by any event as by this. To think I have been breathing my reproaches to a dead heart, hungering for a sight of one who has been dust these two years. Did she remember me when she died, I wonder? O, Alice, and so hard as I was to you once!

September *the twelfth.* — Emily Clay and Hugh Cameron were married the day before yesterday at Stockbridge old church — the last marriage that will take place there previous to its being pulled down. I am told that it was a very gay and very pretty wedding, but I did not see it. At first I thought I would go and sit in one of the galleries as a looker-on, but when the time came I changed my mind, and stayed away. They sent me cards, and, besides, there was a little letter written by Emily after they came from church, and before they set off on their tour. The good, kind heart hers is!

She said she looked round as she came out in the hope of seeing my face, and was disappointed not to do so.

Since I wrote to Sir Edward Singleton about Alice he has been over here again on the old subject, but I told him it was of no avail: I respect the kindness there is in him, but love him I never could!

September the twenty-ninth. — Grannie and I are going to become travellers; it is remarkable to see the old lady's spirit, and how she enters into all my plots and plans! We are to go by way of Belgium, stop at Brussels, that I may see Alice's grave, and then proceed to Paris, and spend the winter there. Ferndell, meanwhile, is to be shut up, for it is impossible to tell how long we may remain away. Uncle Henry insists on my returning for my coming of age next year, but we shall consider of that when the time arrives.

I had one of those great surprises yesterday, which, perhaps, fall to the lot of all women of fortune. Colonel Vernon made me an offer. He is a man whom I admire and respect, but love him, no! Indeed, let all around me speculate as they will, urge as they will, plead as they will, single I remain unless my whole heart can go with my hand, and that it can never, never do. I never can love any one again as I loved Herbert Clay. I have never had a moment's freak of liking for any one else, and never shall. It was a strange oversight of us when we broke our engagement in that abrupt and silly way, not to exchange letters, and those pledge rings we gave each other. I do not wear mine, but I keep it very safely — and his letters too — perhaps he has burnt mine. Miss Thoroton knew nothing about his marriage with any Miss Hargrave; she thought it must

be his cousin, Mr. Frank Clay at Grassleap — it may be. I have asked several people about her, and they all agree as to her amiability and accomplishments, — her beauty I saw for myself.

I have just been glancing over some former entries, and I see that I once made a vow to myself never more to write his name in my book. I have broken it without thinking, but my vow shall be renewed again here. To all maundering regrets, to all lingering follies, a long farewell; a final farewell! I will leave thee at Ferndell, my old book, and not drag my records of past pain into future scenes. Some day, perhaps, when I come home again, a little stronger, or a little colder in heart, I will inquire of thee what I used to be, and tell thee truly what I am become.

FERNDELL, *March the first, eighteen hundred and fifty-four.* — It is six years since I wrote the last word on the opposite page. Six years! There it stands in yellow-brown characters, the written promise pledged to my old book, that I will tell it what I have become! There is that voluminous notebook that I kept when I was abroad; five years and a-half of travellers' experiences. What shall I write? I think I will bring up events to this date: more matter will arise out of that, perchance.

Grannie, there, is as flourishing as ever. Cousin Jane has a houseful of children; Mrs. Cameron has three; the widowed Lady Deering has become Lady Singleton; poor Betsy Lawson is dead; Miss Thoroton has retired from the Stockbridge school, and Miss Smallwood, who has succeeded her does not make things answer; Mr. Clay, of Meadowlands is dead, and his son Herbert is the liberal member for Stockbridge.

Ferndell is looking wild and desolate, and this great house is dreary, dreary as the Moated Grange where Mariana dwelt and pined. And I, my faithful confidant, I am Eleanor Clare still, and likely so to remain — wait till to-morrow, and I will tell thee something more.

March the second. — I fear I am passing into a frame of promise and non-performance, my dear book. I promised yesterday more intelligence of myself — yet, what news have I? Yes; there is one bit of vital interest which shall not escape the chronicle. This morning, Mary Burton discovered my first gray hair, and maliciously twitched it out! I forbade her sternly, ever, at her peril, to repeat the offence! Then I may communicate that my schools are going on well, and that I often lack employment. I wish I had to work for my bread a month or two, just to try what it feels like.

March the third. — Last night I was dining at the Crawfurds, and met Mr. Herbert Clay. Philip Crawford brought him up, and introduced us as strangers, and the first thing I saw was my signet-ring with the bloodstone, on his little finger; what right has he to wear it, I should wish to know? Possibly he never gave it up. He sat down on the couch near me, but he did not talk at all, and scarcely looked at me; at dinner it was the same. I inquired after his mother, and he said she was gone to live at Ashby, to be near Emily, and that he was alone at Meadowlands now. The Cousin Frank and his wife (she was the Miss Hargrave whom I thought Mr. Herbert Clay was to marry) were there; she is handsomer than ever. I was glad to see in what respect Herbert is held, young as he still is, but I felt surprised at his

extreme reserve. It may not be his ordinary manner however, for I overheard Mrs. Crawford ask him if he were ill, and he confessed to being tired.

April the first. — My visit at Burnshead is over, and on Saturday I go to Ashby-on-the-hill. Emily tells me she has set her heart on it; so, with one or two qualms, I have consented to please her: but it will be a great pleasure to me, too. I drove into Stockbridge a day or two since, and made a call upon Miss Thoroton. She begins to be quite decrepit, and her hand shakes almost as if she were stricken with the palsy. Her memory is failing her too, because she spoke of Miss Alice as "a poor dear girl," — "a clever, high-spirited creature, whom I educated, my dear, and who died abroad," and then she repeated the story of her death and burial very minutely — but as if Alice had been a favourite, instead of the butt of all her persecutions. I thought it was as well to keep her in that frame of mind, and I told her in how desolate and neglected a condition I had found her grave. "Ah! did you put her a wreath of everlastings on it! There are everlastings on graves — graves — what were we talking about?" she began to maunder in a pitiable helpless way; at last, she cried with energy! "I would have asked her forgiveness if she had lived: I did not like her, and I believe I did wrong by her. I know I said what was not true, and it has been on my conscience a long while. So she is buried at Brussels; very strange — Brussels! I was once in that cemetery. I should wish to go —" and then she became quite indistinct and babbling again. Miss Smallwood came in while I was there, and made a pitiable statement of her affairs. She said the old school was all gone to pieces; she had but three pupils;

and one of them had never paid anything for two years. She looked very gaunt and shabby, but I did not see that I could do her any good; certainly, I cannot recommend her school; I do not think her fitted to have the sole charge of children, she is so extremely harsh and unpleasant in her manner. When she was going away she signed to me to speak to her outside the room, and then asked me to lend her five pounds. I was very glad to give it to her to soothe my conscience for thinking so ill of her.

April the fifth, Ashby-on-the-Hill. — I have been here with the Camerons three days, and shall leave on Thursday. They are very happy, and have two of the dearest little children — a boy, Herbert, and a girl, Eleanor. Herbert is a very fine fellow — said to be more like his great grandfather Clay than any branch of the family that has appeared since him. Emily has a sensible, nice way with her children. They are both rather wilful and headstrong; but she can be so quietly firm, and yet withal so kind, that there is never the sound of a dispute in the house. Hugh Cameron has found a great treasure in her, and they are both extremely liked at Ashby. Mr. Herbert Clay is absent in London on his parliamentary duties, and will not be down again until the Easter recess. I have met old Mrs. Clay several times, but her manner is just as lacking in cordiality to me as it always was. She cannot hide her bitter dislike.

April the sixth. — A terrible event occurred to-day! Emily was at the school, and Hugh gone over the hill to Deanswalk, when Mrs. Clay arrived at the rectory. I thought she looked very wild and bewildered when she came into the drawing-room where I was sitting, and

her face was quite suffused, but at first I imagined she had over-heated herself by walking fast. She rested on the sofa, and loosed her bonnet. I had only turned away a moment to pick up something belonging to my work, when I heard a gurgling, struggling noise, and on looking hastily up, I saw that she was in a fit. I rang the bell and the servant came in, and laid her on the couch, and the gardener ran for the doctor. Mrs. Clay had not altogether lost consciousness, and she had taken a convulsive grip of my hand which I could not extricate. She rolled her eyes fearfully, and muttered detached sentences, in which her son's name was often repeated, but I could not make out any sense. The doctor presently arrived, and Hugh and Emily came home, and she was carried to a bed; but she never revived, and to-night, about seven o'clock, she died. A death so sudden and painful has been a terrible shock to Emily. Hugh entreats me not to leave her at present, and if I can be either use or comfort to her I shall be glad to stay. Herbert has been written to to come down immediately, but we cannot expect him before to-morrow evening.

April the seventh. — Herbert Clay arrived late last night, and is much affected by the manner of his mother's death. He is anxious and miserable that she should have had no warning, as he calls it, — no time for preparation. Hugh Cameron looks serious, and bids him leave her cause in God's hands, now we can help her nothing. Emily weeps pitiably. What a strange, strange thing this death in a house is! We go stealthily by the closed door where the dust lies, as if our natural step could disturb it. We speak in whispers, as if our natural tone would wake it. With what awe we look

on the vacant mask of clay, whose animating spirit has already stood face to face with God, and learnt the great mystery and secret of death! The mystery and secret we shall learn ourselves, anon. I paused on the mat outside the door, to-night, on my way to bed, and listened. I think there is no hush like the hush that pervades the air where a corpse lies. I had my hand on the handle to go in, but at the remembrance of how she hated me, I refrained. I wish she had died, at peace with me.

April the fourteenth. — I came home to Ferndell the day after Mrs. Clay's funeral. I was reluctant to stay for several reasons. Herbert was not at his ease with me, and then the will — such a will! Mrs. Frank Clay said she considered it infamous. It is difficult to understand how a dislike to me could have carried her the lengths it has done. Mr. Clay left his wife sole guardian and executrix when he died, with unlimited power over every farthing of his invested property, over Meadowlands, and even over the mill and capital embarked in it. Neither Herbert nor Emily possessed a single shilling independently of her. She had taken advantage of the confidence reposed in her by her husband to devise the property in the following way. Herbert and Emily to share equally in the invested property, Herbert to have Meadowlands and the business; but — (and this is put in the strongest and clearest terms), but should Herbert Clay marry Eleanor Clare, he is instantly to forfeit every interest of every nature in the estate, and his share to be equally divided betwixt Herbert and Eleanor Cameron, whose rights are to be vested in trustees, duly named and appointed. Thus, if Herbert Clay desired to return to me he would have to do it as a penniless man. His mother

knew her son's pride well when she dictated this clause of her will!

I was glad, then — O! very glad — to escape from Ashby where he was; but I cannot — no, I cannot yet forgive that miserable dead woman for pursuing me with her malignity, even beyond her grave! Herbert and I love each other still — never shall we! — never shall I, at least, let any other affection usurp the place of the first! Now, if I had been the portionless girl at Burnbank, I might have been a happy woman — wife and mother — as other women are, but as heiress of Ferndell, there is a great gulf fixed between my love and me. I should not write this. I would not even confess it to myself, but that in those few mournful days at Ashby, though we were both so silent — both so constrained, I knew — I felt — all the time that Herbert was thinking only of me as I thought of him. Nobody named the will to me but Mrs. Frank, and she could not restrain her anger. Mrs. Clay ruled her children despotically enough, while she was alive. Surely the yoke should have been broken from off their necks at her death! It is too much! — too much! To feel that Herbert loves me as fondly as ever he did; that now we had met — and his position rises to what the most fastidious and worldly could have desired for me — this frightful bar must be put up between us. I wish I could know that he regrets it as bitterly as I do! I have told Grannie, and she said, "My dear love! if it is to be, it will be!" but that does not console me.

April the twenty-fourth. — I have had Mrs. Frank Clay over to see me. She says that Herbert is bent on giving up all at Stockbridge, taking the few hundreds he has laid by since a seventh share of the business has

been in his hands (and which he may truly consider his own as he would have done, had his father been alive), and going to New Zealand.

She says he declared, in the homely, west-country phrase: "If Eleanor Clare would come to me in her smock, then I would take her and be the most contented, poor man in the three kingdoms; but marry the rich heiress of Ferndell — myself almost destitute — I never will; so help me God!"

Why does he not come and tell me that to my face? Does he think I love Ferndell as I love him? Does he think I should be happier in this great, dreary house, fading into old maidenhood alone, pining and unsatisfied, than I should be with him in that little rustic cottage he used to fancy when we were scarcely more than boy and girl — the dear wife of his heart, the mother of his children. He ought to have the courage to come and speak to me honestly, as I would speak to him were I Herbert Clay and he Eleanor Clare. O! he knows — he must know — I love him; and if he understands at all what a true woman is, he must know, too, that she will set no wealth, no rank, in competition with her love. Why does he not dare to speak to me? Can he have conceived some false idea of me since we have been so long apart? Can he think I would scorn him? I would honour him if he could make the vast sacrifice which his mother has attached as the penalty of our marriage. It would be noble — it would be grand! Then would I know how much he loved me; and I would give up Ferndell to Jane's and Henry's children. It should be sold, and they should all share in it alike. O, what an infatuated fool I am, feeding my heart on dreams, as if this could ever be!

May the sixth. — I have not been out of Ferndell since I returned from Ashby; I think I am losing heart, losing health! I know I shall never live if I am to be miserable like this. Emily Cameron writes me almost daily about her brother. What can I do? Is it for me to beseech him to stay? I cannot, I will not do it! If he love me let him come and tell me so, and I will forgive him all the rest — all his doubts, all the pain I have had to suffer for him — and keep him here. If he is proud, I am proud, too; but it is easier for him to bend than for me. He can come to me, and say, "Eleanor, we two love each other; thus much must I sacrifice to obtain you, but I count it nothing in comparison with my love —" I do not think men's hearts are like ours. I begin to fear that the time has come when Herbert has ceased to care for me. That is a miserable thought! O, why did we meet again after I came from abroad? I had not forgotten him, not ceased to prefer him, but I had become quite still and resigned to being alone; now it seems to me as if there were neither hope nor joy in life apart from him.

May the tenth. — This is a bitter struggle; I sicken over it; if it last much longer scarcely shall I survive it. Yesterday Emily Cameron came over here and brought her boy. It was torture to me. There the little fellow sat drumming, with the toy he had brought in the carriage, and innocently prattling, while I longed to hear of Herbert. It was not until she was leaving that I could ask if he still persisted in going to New Zealand, and she replied, "Yes, she believed his preparations were very forward;" then asked me if I did not think it a wild scheme. I did think it wild.

"Then bid him stay, Eleanor," replied she, looking

at me meaningly. I felt faint and ill, but I did not open my lips, and she drove away.

This morning's post brought me a letter from her. She says my haggard face haunts her — what does it mean? Let her guess what it means. She has known heart-sickness herself!

May the twelfth. — Peace at last! I was straying this afternoon down into the beechwood alone, so solitary, so utterly desolate, when I came suddenly on Herbert Clay. He said he had seen me from the road: he had left his horse at the lodge, and had come up to meet me.

"And what have you to say to me, Herbert Clay?" I asked as proudly as I could, but my throat swelled, and I know my face was pitiful. We were in amongst the trees, no one could see us, and he just took me in his arms and kissed me as if I were his wife. "Eleanor, I would lose the world for you!" said he, passionately; and I told him I would come to him as poor as himself.

Then all that blank of years seemed to fall away out of being and out of memory — to say that I was happy is not enough: I was too contented, too joyful for words to express! And it is all, all true; no dream, no frenzy has bewildered me. I shall be Herbert's own faithful, loving wife!

"And shall we go out of England?" I asked him.

"It should be just as I desired," he said.

"Then we will live amongst our own people here at Stockbridge," I answered, "in that cottage by Brookend, where there are the roses and the earwigs — your old fancy, Herbert, shall we?"

He said, "If I liked it, we should."

I can scarcely have patience to sit still and write and remember how completely the old spirit came into us both after that; there was no more doubt, no more anxiety. I believe we shall go hand in hand through our chosen poverty up to our present estate again before we are old — not that I care to be rich — all my sorrows have risen out of that; but I should like Herbert restored to his place — I should like him to be to others what he is to me — the best and highest-hearted of men!

After we had walked in the beechwood till I was tired, we went in to Grannie — of course, she understood it all the moment we appeared, and she clasped her hands in great agitation. "You will not surely be so silly!" was her remark.

We could neither of us help smiling, but Herbert said, we were bent on marrying each other, and we should begin life together afresh at Brookend Cottage.

"At Brookend Cottage! and what is to become of Ferndell?" asked she, dismayed.

"It is going to be transferred to Henry's and Jane's children," said I, "leaving you as life tenant."

"Nothing of the kind. I shall go back to Burnbank; I always liked it better than this wilderness place." And Grannie knitted very fast and carelessly.

I put my face down and looked at her; "Tell me, Grannie, that you are glad to see me happy?" said I.

There were tears in her dear old eyes; "My love, did I not tell you if it was to be, it would be?" replied she. "Well, I am happy; I would not have liked to see Eleanor Clare wither into an old maid."

Now, then, to strengthen myself for the battle that

I foresee betwixt the Scropes and cousin Henry and myself! I shall fully expect to be called insane for what I am going to do, and Herbert will not escape either; but what matters it? We shall have each other, and shall be happy. I believe we are two Solomons, myself.

May the seventeenth. — Cousin Henry and Mr. Scrope are just gone, in the impression that I am the most obstinate, unreasonable, foolish woman on the face of the earth. I am not certain that they really think so, but they said so, and said the world would say so, too. What care I for the world? It has done nothing for me, and I do not choose to sacrifice my life to it. Why should I? My little circle of it will talk, and wonder, and premise, and settle for nine days, and then they will be quiet; unless they choose to profit by the moral lesson, that there exist in the world one man and one woman who love each other sufficiently to give up wealth for poverty. Herbert is up here every day, nearly, and we are making our own arrangements quietly. He has bought that Brookend Cottage for two hundred and seventy pounds, and it is now undergoing thorough repairs. I went over it, and found it contained a pretty little bay window drawing-room opening upon the lawn, a dining-room, and four bedrooms — quite enough for us. The owner told him it was quite a fancy article, and so it is: one of those pretty, picturesque, flowery cottages, to which disappointed heroines in novels retire to spin out the rest of their days. Its situation is very secluded — about two miles out of Stockbridge, in the Meadowlands direction. I proposed to take into it some of the furniture out of my “sulky here,” but Herbert said “No;” and I am obedient. He, however, gives me

a dispensation in favour of my own books, and of all the pretty trifles we brought from my room at Burnbank; and Grannie will take back thither the plenishing of the garden apartment that we have in daily use, and which she furnished herself, as all the Burnbank things were sold when we left. She says it will feel like going home again; she has never considered herself more than a visitor at Ferndell. There was only one thing grieving me, and that was her pony carriage; but Uncle Henry says, of course she shall keep it; and the present suggestion is, that Clara Favell, his eldest girl, should go and live with her as I used to do. Clara is a nice, merry body, and Grannie likes cheerfulness.

There is some speculation afloat as to how, when, and where I am to be married to Herbert. We have arranged it ourselves. Burnbank will be ready to receive us in a month from this time. Grannie and I go thither by ourselves. The papers are to be prepared for transferring Ferndell to the Scrope and Favell children. Herbert is to get a lease as tenant of the mill; and in September we are to be married. A brief space it seems since his mother's death; but her wicked will has so unsettled him, that it cannot be wrong or disrespectful to make it as speedily as possible lose its evil influence; and as he, as it were, begins life afresh, the sooner he begins it the better. He resigns his seat in parliament. He is much commiserated by some, much blamed by others; but never, I pray God, shall either of us live to regret the step we are about to take.

June the twenty-ninth. — Cousin Henry has been over to see how we have settled at Burnbank. "Perfectly," I tell him; "we are quite at home again." Grannie looks remarkably cheerful and contented; and,

when Henry talks about my wildness in giving up Ferndell to please Herbert Clay, she cuts him short with: "Well, Henry, it will only come to those who ought to have had it from the beginning." And when he persists that I lose my share, being one of the three heirs, she just bids him hold his tongue.

When we left Ferndell, Burton thought he could not come down to the "small doings" at Burnbank again; so he went up to town to get a better situation; and we have hired that beautiful Anty Craggs as our "odd man." His face is fatter and more freckled, and his hair is redder than ever; but he is a civil servant, and very careful in driving Grannie up and down the hills, which is the chief thing he has to do. Herbert comes down on Saturday evening, and stays with us over Sunday.

August the fifteenth. — Dr. Rayson has laid claim to his paramount right to marry — having baptised me; but as both Mr. Scrope and Hugh Cameron think they have, at least, an equal right, they are each to assist the other, and all be satisfied. They tell us it is only once in a life-time they can expect to perform the service for so romantic a pair, and they will not lose the opportunity. Herbert is very passive in the matter, for his hands are full of business. I want to get the papers signed that make over Ferndell to my cousins' children; but both Mr. Scrope and Cousin Henry insist that I shall not put pen to paper until the very morning of my marriage, just before we go to church, when it will be still time to change my mind, if I feel so disposed. Grannie and I have been to Stockbridge, to see my future home, now it is finished. I think it a gem of elegant simplicity. O, I shall be happy there! The day fixed for our marriage is the sixth of September. It is

to be very quiet: only the Camerons, Scropes, Cousin Henry and his wife, and Clare, old Mrs. Lake, and Dr. Rayson are to be invited. This is Herbert's wish, and mine too. The school children at Ashby, Ferndell, Burnshead, and this place, are to have a tea-drinking on the occasion; that is all the lively rejoicing we intend. Lady Deering and Lady Singleton express the profoundest wonderment at Herbert Clay and myself; and Lady Mary Vernon vows she shall take us for the hero and heroine of her next book, for she is sure ours is a sweetly pretty story, and a very good plot.

My wedding-day. Come and almost gone! Ferndell belongs to the Scropes and Favells, and I belong to my own love, that is, true Herbert. I have nothing to write but that I am happy, happy, too happy for many words! I see before me the years of a life that will suffice my heart better, a thousandfold better, than all the rank and money in the world. Herbert, who is watching me impatiently while I write, says it shall lack nothing he can give to make it blest; and I believe it. With him it can lack nothing; without him it lacks all. Now, let me sign myself by his name, and leave the rest of the page blank.

ELEANOR CLAY.

ROMANTIC BREACH OF PROMISE.

IN fifteen hundred and thirty-eight, when France happened to be at peace; and nothing was talked of at Court, say the memoir-writers, but festivals, tournaments, carnivals, masquerades, and so forth, one incident occurred to supply the town-folks with talk. This was no other than the action for breach of promise of marriage, brought by the Marquis Jehan-Loys, of Saluces, against Madame Philippes de Montespedon, widow of Marshal Monte-Jan, who had been governing Piedmont. Some of the details of this case are singular enough to deserve a narrative on their own account: others are amusing chiefly because of their odd similarity with sentimental passages in the lives of our own country-folks, from time to time revealed to us in courts of law.

Marshal Monte-Jan died in Piedmont, leaving no children. His wife was instantly besieged with offers of marriage by various great lords of that state — a circumstance at which we are requested by the chroniclers “not to marvel.” For, Madame Philippes was a very respectable and virtuous lady, adorned with great beauty, and in the flower of her youth; she possessed, moreover, in addition to all these perfections, sixty thousand livres of revenue in her own right, besides considerable expectations. First among the suitors, who followed so closely on the funeral, was the above-mentioned Marquis of

Saluces, who seems to have been a foolish fellow, and who was certainly most scandalously treated. The narrator was on the lady's side, but he naïvely states very damaging facts. Madame Philippes feigned to accept the marquis's service, because it would be convenient to make use of his escort on the way back to France, whither he was going by express order of the king. Despite of her riches, the fair widow seems to have been accidentally without ready cash. She allowed her suitor to pay her expenses all the way from Turin to Paris; and these expenses were by no means light. All the household of her late husband, besides her own, accompanied her. The marquis thought he had the game in his own hands, and assumed the tone of a master by anticipation — intimated that the gentlemen, servants, and officers of the deceased should be dismissed, item half those of the lady herself, especially the women — for she had besides dames and demoiselles, femmes de chambre, and others for different kinds of work, as many as fifteen or sixteen. But Madame Philippes was so prudent that she never, it is alleged, allowed a word to escape that would bind her; and yet so clever that she obtained all the assistance she wanted.

The marquis, as soon as they got upon French ground, had ordered (Italian that he was) all his people to be on the watch to prevent any communication being brought from a rival; for, he did not doubt that such a rare pearl would be eagerly sought after. Yet, in spite of all precautions, as soon as the party arrived at Lyons, a courier came from M. de Vieilleville, a relative of the lady, and delivered his letters so secretly that no one ever suspected their existence. These letters contained the information that the court had heard of the proposed

marriage with the Marquis of Saluces, and believed the couple were coming to Paris for the wedding. The news had much pleased the king, because he had always heard that love bound a man to a country more than anything, and thought that the marquis, having become a Frenchman by this alliance, would be more faithful ever afterwards. This was a sentimentality not to have been expected from Francis the First. However, said the correspondent, "I think you are going to marry more for the good of your own country than your own good — if what I hear be true: but I cannot yet believe it; for it is not likely that you would, after having been so happy in your first marriage, enter on another so hurriedly without even warning your friends."

Madame de Monte-Jan in reply wrote a very characteristic letter. Among other things, she said: "I would rather die than do anything of which I might have reason to repent; yet I will confess that the extreme necessity in which the death of the late marshal left me, almost made me trip in words. But heaven has so helped me, that here I am arrived in France, without being affianced, promised, or contracted to living man. . . . I am very much surprised the king should think I am going to bring him servants at the expense of my good fortune, and against my tastes. I will never be an Italian; and, if I were, the last man I should choose to make me so would be the Marquis Jehan-Loys — for reasons which I will give you when we meet, but, especially, because he is not, and never will be, a true Frenchman."

But in spite of this declaration, the beautiful Madame Philippes remained at Lyons, under the charge of this marquis, who spent twelve days in making the preparations, intending to arrive at court in magnificent style.

When the party at length set out, their baggage was so enormous, that six great boats were filled. They did all their cooking on board. With them they took a band of fiddlers, engaged by the marquis to amuse him on the river, and alleviate the ennui of the lady for the loss of her husband. They embarked on the Loire at Ronanne, and sent by land the horses and mules, which arrived as soon as they did at Briare.

M. de Vieilleville had news of their movements nearly every day, by the couriers who constantly passed on their way from Piedmont to the court; he went out from Paris as far as Corbeil, with about eighty horse, on the evening when the travellers arrived at Ersonne. He sent a messenger directly to Madame Philippes, informing her of his movements, and got back an answer not to show himself until the next day, at the dinner that was to take place at Juirzy. The lady appears to have been afraid that if the slightest suspicion of his intention had come to the marquis, he would have seized her and married her by force.

Vieilleville politely kept out of the way until the dinner was over, and then rode up with his troop. There were great reverence and salutations; and all those men began to talk as well about the good cheer they had enjoyed by the road, as about the adventures that necessarily happen in so long a journey. At a fitting opportunity, however, the lady slipped away; and, secretly calling the Sieur Plessis-au-Chat, a Breton gentleman in her service, ordered him as soon as they reached the Porte Saint Marceau, to disentangle her train from that of her suite, and move along the moat, in the direction of the Porte Saint-Gagnes, where they were to stop whilst she bade adieu to the marquis.

Soon afterwards every one mounted, ladies and all; and this gorgeous brilliant train arrived in good time at Paris. At the gate Plessis-au-Chat carried out his instructions, and dextrously separated the lady's people from the others. The marquis, surprised, called out that they mistook the way. But now, Madame Philippes pulling up, said: "Sir, they are going where they ought; for your lodging is in the Hostel des Ursins, in the Cloister of Notre Dame, and mine is in the Hostel Saint Denys, near the Augustines. My honour commands me not to lodge in your house, but to separate myself from you, which is why I now bid you adieu; but not, sir, without thanking you very humbly for your good company by the road. As to my part of the expense, I have it all down in writing. Your Maistre d'Hôtes and Plessis-au-Chat will settle matters so well together, that before a week is over we shall be quits; I mean as far as regards money; for, my obligation to you will be eternal. Now, I beg you to consider that this separation is only a bodily separation; I leave you my heart, which you will be pleased to keep." So saying, she kissed him and said, "Adieu, sir, we shall meet to-morrow at the king's lodging."

The marquis was so astonished at this sudden change, that for a long time he could not utter a single word. His sighs and sobs, however, showed his anguish and his sadness. At last his presence of mind returned, and, looking at the lady in anything but a loving manner, he said: "Madam, your adieu gave my heart a pang; but your last words, and the kiss with which you have honoured me, have somewhat revived me, though this sudden change and prompt resolution seem strange. To-

morrow, as you say, we shall meet; but bear in mind the promises you have given me. Adieu, madam!"

Then the two companions parted; and Madame Philippes joyfully took her way in liberty to the Hôtel Saint Denys. The same evening, Vieilleville brought to her and introduced as a suitor the Prince de la Rochesuryon, who was of royal blood, being brother of the Duke of Montpensier, "If you will believe me, make this gentleman, as soon as possible, master of your person and your wealth, for all delay will be perilous," said he. The prince and Madame Philippes were pleased with one another, and exchanged promises.

Meanwhile the Marshal Dannebund, who had succeeded Marshal Monte-Jan in his governorship, had formed the project of succeeding also to his widow and property. He therefore had written to the dauphine to plead his cause, and to represent that by putting their revenues together they might make up a hundred thousand livres a-year, a very rare thing in France for any one but a prince. The dauphine came with this proposal, and strongly spoke in favour of Dannebund. "I know," said she, "that the Marquis of Saluces is three times as rich, but his position is more uncertain. Besides, he is very disagreeable in person, with a big belly, fat, dirty, swarthy, and awkward. Whereas my candidate, as you know, is a very presentable fellow."

To this, Madame Philippes replied by confirming her engagements with the prince, and the dauphine accordingly withdrew her proposal, and recommended her to marry as fast as possible, because the king laid great stress on the alliance, and might exercise his absolute authority.

The marquis never passed a day without calling to see his mistress; instead of finding her alone, he always met the Prince de la Rochesuryon, who thus became a very thorn in his side. By no means whatever could he obtain a tête-à-tête interview. So at last, unable to put up with his annoying position any longer, he suddenly began a legal action, and arraigned the lady before the parliament of Paris. This he did by express command of the king, who had the marriage very much at heart, though he did not like to use his own authority against the interests of a prince of his own blood.

Madame Philippes was much disturbed by the prospect of being forced to ally herself with her obstinate suitor; and we may be sure there were anxious consultations at the Hôtel Saint Denys. When the day of trial came, she appeared, accompanied by M. de Vieilleville, and many other lords and gentlemen, ladies and maidens. Every one expected a long and scandalous discussion. The First President began the proceedings by telling Madame Philippes to raise her hand and swear to tell the truth; one then asked her if she had not promised marriage to Monsieur le Marquis Jehan-Loys de Saluces, then present. The lady, forgetting all her hints and inuendoes, replied, on her faith, No. The president was about to examine her closely, and the greffier had taken up his pen, when the fair defendant stepped forward, and in a firm voice uttered the following speech:

"Messieurs, this is the first time I have ever been before a court of justice; and therefore, I am afraid that timidity may make me contradict myself in my answers. But, to cut short all the subtleties in which you are so proficient, I now say and declare, before you,

gentlemen and all present, that I swear to God and the king — to God on the eternal damnation of my soul — to the king on the confiscation of my honour and my life — that I never gave any promise of marriage to Monsieur le Marquis Jehan-Loys of Saluces; and what is more, never thought of doing so in my life. And if any one says the contrary, here (taking M. de Vieilleville by the hand), here is my knight who is ready, saving the honour of this court, to prove that he villainously lies!”

This warlike demonstration, so much in harmony with the character of the period, and the chivalry which Francis the First was trying to revive, met with complete success.

“Here’s a business!” exclaimed the President, familiarly. “Greffier, you can pack up your papers. There is no writing to do. Madame la Maréchale has taken another road; and a much shorter one.” Then addressing the Marquis, he said: “Well, sir, what observation do you make on this incident?”

The Marquis had glanced at his own portly person, and compared it with the martial aspect of the lady’s knight.

“I don’t want a wife by force,” said he. “If she won’t have me, why I won’t have her; and there’s an end.”

With these words he made a low bow and left the Court. Then M. de Vieilleville asked if the lady were not free to marry whom she liked, and, being answered in the affirmative, invited the whole company to come and be present at the betrothal between Madame Philippes and the Prince de la Rochesuryon, which would take place immediately. But the wily lawyers

declined, saying that they must deliberate and send a deputy to acquaint the king with what had taken place. One of them also whispered to the knight: "You had a six months' trial before you if you had not been so clever. The Marquis had an interrogatory of forty articles prepared as to expressions that had been publicly used by the lady to him and his people; as to the kisses she had given him by the way, especially the kiss at Porte Saint Marceau; and as to her saying to one Saint-Julien (a circumstance that would have gone much against her), that she would give him a chain of five hundred écus for the wedding."

"Well, well," said Vieilleville smiling, "all we need say now is, that a Frenchwoman has outwitted a hundred Italians."

Thereupon, the betrothal between Madame Philippes and the prince, immediately took place; and in two or three days they were married at the Augustins without much ceremony, the bride being a widow. They lived happily together for twenty-five years, and had a son and a daughter; but the princess survived both her husband and her children, and died in fifteen hundred and seventy-eight, forty years after her curious journey from Turin to Paris.

THE BRAVE COUCOU DRIVER.

ABOUT fourteen years ago, a wedding tour which had been rather brilliantly inaugurated with four greys, two postilions in bright blue jackets, and the usual accompaniment of white satin favours, terminated in a manner which, considering the difference of style, might almost be called ignominious. We had taken Amiens on our way home from Paris, and had proceeded thence to Abbeville, where, having passed the night, and soon exhausted the wonders of the town on the following morning, we began to look about us for the means of reaching Boulogne. To wait until midnight for the Diligence from Paris, on the chance of obtaining two places, was out of the question, and, in all probability, would have answered no purpose, as it was generally booked full all the way through. To post was not desirable with finances somewhat exhausted — such things will happen on wedding tours when Paris is included in them — and there remained only the option of proceeding by whatever cheap conveyance we might manage to pick up.

Assured on inquiry that we should be certain to find some conveyance, we set out on a voyage of discovery, trying the market-place first, then the little square in front of the old church of St. Wolfram, then certain Remises which promised much but performed nothing,

till with our patience nearly exhausted we were informed at last, that one Monsieur Jerome, if he could be found, was the man for our purpose: he being the proprietor of a vehicle with which he traversed the country in all directions.

The person who gave us this information, an idler in a blouse and cotton nightcap, added to his civility by conducting us down a very narrow, dirty lane to the residence of Monsieur Jerome, who — of course — was not at home.

"But it's very extraordinary," said his wife, desisting for a moment from her occupation of scraping and cutting up carrots for her pot au feu. "But it's very extraordinary. Only a little quarter of an hour ago, he was sitting on that chair!"

If Monsieur Jerome had occupied the chair unexpectedly, like Banquo's ghost, I could have understood his wife's cause for wonderment; but as he was the master of the house, it seemed only a natural thing that he should sit down in it; equally natural that he should no longer be there if he felt a desire to go out.

The friend in the blouse suggested the possibility of unearthing Monsieur Jerome at a neighbouring house of entertainment, known as the Good Sportsman.

It was very singular that idea had never come into her head. Yes, it was possible! Would monsieur and madame object to wait one single instant, while her husband was sent for? Monsieur Pierre, that was the gentleman in the blouse, would run and call him. He was an old friend.

Monsieur Pierre, with an eye perhaps to the future, in which there loomed a petit verre, was all alacrity.

He merely requested me to be calm, and straightway disappeared.

In the mean time monsieur and madame would take seats, such as they were. It was a poor place, that was not a difficult thing to see, but what would you have? One must live where one could; rents were high; and those people (meaning the landlord) never waited for their money, it must be ready in the hand when called for. She had three children — the eldest a girl, who would soon be old enough to do something for herself — she was now at school, but was next month to take her first sacrament; the other two, both boys, had lately had the measles, and were staying, for the sake of change of air, at their grandmother's, near the sea; it was said that sea-air was good for children —

The family history was cut short by a clattering of sabots in the lane, and, at the sound, Madame Jerome rushed out, without relinquishing either knife or carrot, and cried out at the top of her voice, for her husband to make haste. A gentleman and lady desired to speak to him. Already a whole hour had they been waiting!

This hyperbolical declaration had scarcely been uttered, before Monsieur Jerome stood on his own threshold.

Like the friend who seemed familiar with his noon-tide haunt, he, too, was attired in blouse and nightcap. He doffed the latter as he entered the cottage, and, addressing himself to me, inquired what there was for my service: that is to say, what did I happen to require?

This was soon told. I had heard from his friend, Monsieur Pierre — who, at this allusion stepped in and pulled off his nightcap also — that he, Monsieur Jerome,

was the proprietor of a cabriolet de louage, or carriage of some kind, and that I wished to hire the same to go from Abbeville to Boulogne.

Yes, monsieur was perfectly right; he had, indeed, a famous carriage; they were wrong who called it a cabriolet — it was far more convenient, much more roomy, infinitely more solid. Certainly that carriage was at the disposition of monsieur and madame — madame was to be of the journey also? Good! — and the baggage. As for that, the carriage could take my quantity — without doubt — but —

Here Monsieur Jerome paused, and was constrained to admit that a difficulty existed. Of the three horses he possessed, two were already on distant journeys, and the third — the unfortunate beast — was dead lame. Nothing in the whole course of his life had ever put him out so much before. It was for the purpose of speaking to the veterinary surgeon on the subject of that horse's lameness — there was no other motive — that he had just run over to the Good Sportsman. What was to be done?

Monsieur Pierre, who seemed to be a sort of good genius to the Jerome family, threw in a second suggestion. Might not his friend contrive to borrow a horse? There was Poirot the miller; he had one that was superb, an animal unacquainted with fatigue; that horse, if it could be obtained, would remove all cause of anxiety.

Monsieur Jerome admitted that the qualities of the horse in question were such as Monsieur Pierre had described. He had himself been thinking of another noble quadruped — the mare belonging to Madame Morel, the marchande de bois; but, perhaps, the miller's horse would be the better one — at all events, it was

closer at hand. In any case, monsieur and madame might rest contented a horse should be found; in less than half an hour he would present himself with his equipage at the door of Monsieur's hotel.

The next question was, the price to be paid for the hire of Monsieur Jerome's conveyance. After a little haggling — based on the part of Monsieur Jerome upon the usual grounds, exaggerated distance, mountains, and so forth — the terms were settled, including a *pour-boire* for skilful driving, yet to be demonstrated — and an agreement was made, it being now eleven in the forenoon, that we should be safely deposited in Boulogne before the clock struck ten that night.

On the faith of these assurances we hurried back to the hotel, a little flustered by the apprehension of not being quite ready, paid our bill, had the luggage brought down into the courtyard, and waited for Monsieur Jerome's arrival. There was no need to have been in a hurry, for the promised half-hour went by, and another was added to it, without the slightest indication of his appearance. We began to be impatient, sent out twice to the market-place to see if the carriage was coming, discussed the probabilities of the case with an unoccupied waiter who, when he had heard my story, gave it as his opinion that Monsieur Jerome would not come at all, and was in the act of recommending a heavy berline that stood in a corner which, with post-horses —

He, too, was cut short by a noise: a noise of excessive rumbling, mingled with urgent vociferation, and presently a vehicle entered the court-yard, which proved to be the one I expected; Monsieur Jerome driving, Monsieur Pierre by his side, and both gesticulating with much vehemence.

When I make use of the word expected, I do not exactly state a fact. To say the truth, the carriage of Monsieur Jerome was not of the kind which I had pictured to myself, neither was the animal that drew it. With respect to the former, on one or two points Monsieur Jerome was certainly right. It was infinitely more solid than any cabriolet that ever was built; more roomy, too, there could be no doubt of it; the fact of its being more convenient remained to be seen. There are some things which command respect on the score of antiquity, but it may be questioned whether a travelling-carriage belongs to that category. If so, Monsieur Jerome's conveyance put in a strong claim for veneration. Its age was proclaimed by its creak and blurs and patches; its wrinkled hood was stony white with dust; its heavy wheels and faded body were clogged and smeared with mire. No English word can clearly describe its form, so a French one must suffice — I can call it nothing but a veritable coucou. As to the horse, I might name fifty things which it was not, leaving it to be inferred, from accumulated negatives, what it really was. One saw at a glance, for instance, that it was not a splendid, scarcely a high, stepper; its action was neither grand nor superior; it did not appear fast; I should have declined to warrant it sound; easy to drive seemed more than doubtful; quiet in harness — well, that was just possible. Of its antecedents I was left in ignorance, as Monsieur Jerome refrained from stating whether his horse came out of the mill or the woodcart. Enough for him to crack his whip and exclaim:

“Voilà, monsieur!” with an air of intense satisfaction.

That satisfaction was not shared by the partner of my journey and bosom. She regarded Monsieur Jerome's

turn-out with a look of so much astonishment and dismay that, if I had given her time to express either, he never would have had the honour of being her charioteer. So I anticipated whatever she intended to say by observing that there was no help for it, as we must go to Boulogne that night, and I ordered the men to stow away the baggage. That readiness to submit to almost any inconvenience rather than make a fuss, that willingness to meet difficulties more than half-way, that cheerfulness of disposition which makes every ill fall lightly — all of which have since been tested on many a long day's journey, in many a trying hour — were manifested on this occasion; not a word of remonstrance was uttered, and when Monsieur Jerome announced that his arrangements were complete, my companion smiled assent to his proposition that we should ascend, as readily as if he had invited us to take our seats in a triumphal car.

But before we climbed into the coucou — such, literally, was the process — I reminded Monsieur Jerome that he was an hour later than the time he had appointed, and that I expected he would fulfil his promise as to the period of our arrival at Boulogne.

“Have no fear,” he replied (the Frenchman's stereotyped answer). “With such a horse” — pointing to it — “distance is nothing.”

The waiter who had recommended the berline, smiled and shrugged his shoulders as he held a chair for madame to step on, to reach her place in the carriage. I affected not to notice his gesture, and, after bestowing a franc upon Monsieur Pierre for the trouble he had taken, followed my wife into the depths of the coucou. Monsieur Jerome then resumed his place in front, and, much

to my surprise, the light was suddenly obscured by Monsieur Pierre seating himself beside him.

"Stop!" I exclaimed, touching Monsieur Jerome on the shoulder, as he was giving the reins a preliminary shake. "What does this person want here?"

"Ah!" returned Monsieur Jerome, with a familiar nod, "he is my friend — he means to accompany us."

This arrangement was rather too cool, and I immediately upset it.

"Your friend," said I, "may travel with you, but not with us. Tell him to get down."

Monsieur Jerome stared.

"It will make no difference to the horse," he observed.

"But it makes a considerable difference," I retorted, "to me."

"He is only going to see his aunt, about two leagues off," persisted Monsieur Jerome.

"Let him pay her a visit on foot," I replied. "Listen, Monsieur Jerome! Either your friend gets out, or we do. Choose between us!"

This was an alternative for which he was not prepared; he muttered something, gave his companion a dig with his elbow, the space in front was cleared, and laying on his beast with a little more emphasis than he might, under other circumstances, have done, Monsieur Jerome set the coucou in motion. Monsieur Pierre's eviction had not, however, caused Monsieur Pierre to lose his temper; for as the vehicle twirled round at the gateway I caught a glimpse of him, nightcap in hand, grinning a very polite adieu. The waiter, the porter, and several others in the court-yard, were grinning.

For the first mile or two, the horse went at a lazy jog-trot; my wife and I talked laughingly about this new mode of travelling, but Monsieur Jerome preserved a strict, if not a sullen, silence. As, however, it is not in a Frenchman's nature to refrain from talking, if he have anybody to speak to, he took advantage of the first incline that caused his animal to walk — it was a gradient against the collar, of one foot, perhaps, in a thousand — and turned round with the evident resolve to make himself agreeable.

Monsieur Jerome was a gaunt-looking man with large whiskers and a big voice; and but for a certain unsteadiness in his eye, might have passed for one of the fiercest fellows that ever flourished a whip.

"Eh bien, monsieur!" he began, "have I not kept my word?"

It was, I thought, rather early in the day to put this question, so I asked him in what respect.

"Dam'!" he replied. "Monsieur perceives what an excellent jument (mare) I have procured."

"I have no objection to make to her, as yet," I answered; "only I should say she is rather fond of walking."

"Monsieur would not gallop up the hills?" was the somewhat reproachful exclamation of Monsieur Jerome.

"You don't, I hope, call this a hill?" I rejoined.

"It is true there are others more difficult, which we shall come to by-and-by, but you see I am careful of her at first — I husband her strength. Hi! forward, la Maligne! we are no longer in the mill. Hi! hi!"

At this hint la Maligne jogged on again, and Monsieur Jerome remarked triumphantly:

"See there, monsieur! She is capable of doing all things!"

It might be so; but it was quite clear that of the two things in question, la Maligne preferred walking to trotting.

Monsieur Jerome having, as he supposed, sufficiently established the reputation of his borrowed beast, now changed the subject.

"Apparently, from his desire to get to Boulogne, monsieur is English? And madame?"

"English also."

"And yet monsieur and madame both speak French as I do. That is singular! for although I have been many times to Boulogne, I do not at all speak English."

This fact was less surprising to me than it appeared to Monsieur Jerome; but, without commenting on his presumed incapacity to acquire a language, of which, in all likelihood, he had never heard more than half a dozen words, I asked him if his occupation as a voiturier often took him to Boulogne.

Yes; it happened now and then. Twice or three times, perhaps, within the year. But he had once stayed there some time. Ah! an event happened there which he should never forget! Monsieur probably knew the large barrack in the lower town, not far from the port? Well; once he was laid up there, in the military hospital, with wounds, for three months.

"You have seen service, then?" I remarked.

"Dam"! Yes. In Algeria, with General Bugeaud. Hi! La Maligne! Keep straight on! But those wounds were not inflicted by the Arabs. They were obtained in a different sort of warfare — yes, 'faith!"

If Monsieur Jerome desired to excite our curiosity, he succeeded. He saw that he had done so; and, taking for granted that we wished to know all about it, he began his story, which I shall repeat without the occasional interruptions that took place while he told it.

"In the first place," he said, "I possess one great fault. I have too much courage. It very often gets me into trouble. When the blood mounts to my eyes, I hesitate not to attack an army! A thousand enemies are to me — nothing! not the shake of that whip. Well, then. Six years ago I was quartered at Boulogne, in the Thirty-seventh of the Line — a regiment well enough known. I was, without flattering myself, the best swordsman in the garrison. Had I chosen to teach fencing, my pupils would have been without number. On that account, and for my moral character, I was respected. The colonel, when he rebuked the men, would say, 'Take example by Jerome Premier' (there was another Jerome in the regiment, a person of no account), 'he is a pattern!' Consequently, I was a mark for envy. More than one would have liked a quarrel with me, had he dared to encourage the idea. Well! What a man has not the hardihood to imagine of his own accord, is, you see, sometimes forced upon him by circumstances — above all, when one has to do with the fair sex. If I was respected and feared by my comrades, those were not alone the sources of my pride. I had other successes: madame will permit me the expression! There was a charming young girl, her name was Georgette — such a figure! such a face! How she danced! with me, too, more than with any one else — no matter for the reason. More cause for envy. Monsieur has heard of the *du-casses* — the country fêtes — near Boulogne? It was

at one of these, on the festival of the Assumption, out of which the affair I am going to speak of arose. Georgette and I had already danced together three times, and she had promised me her hand again. In the meanwhile, reposing from exertion, I offered her a bottle of *Bière de Mars* in an alcove. That was a simple politeness. Having poured out to her honour, I naturally proposed a toast, and while she sipped from her glass I smoked a cigar. In fine, we enjoyed a supreme happiness. It was not to last long. Apart from where we sat, stood a knot of men belonging to the Thirty-seventh. They threw at me glances of fury — I had robbed them in turn of Georgette. That was their grievance. Slowly they approached, in a body, towards the alcove; the foremost amongst them, a sergeant in the regiment, a man of gigantic stature. 'Will mam'sell' dance?' he said, addressing Georgette; 'I claim her hand for the next set.' Before she could reply I observed, 'You are too soon, sergeant, mam'sell' is engaged.' 'And to whom, then?' he asked, frowning like a drum-major at the head of a battalion; 'I see none here better than myself.' 'To me, sergeant,' I replied, with an admirable calmness; 'I am the better man on this occasion.' 'You!' exclaimed the sergeant — his name was Bousingot — 'a pleasant fellow this!' I felt my blood heating, but yet appeared cool. 'Permit me to cause you to observe, Sergeant Bousingot,' I said, 'that you interrupt a conversation which you were not invited to join.' Still polite, you see, monsieur. 'I require no invitation,' he replied, rudely, 'Mam'sell' Georgette is my acquaintance no less than yours!' 'The laws of society, sergeant,' I remarked, 'are then unknown to you!' His face became redder than the beet-root you see in yonder field. He uttered

an expression which I dare not repeat before madame. That provoked me. I reminded him that his manners were those of a cabaretier. His insolence then passed all bounds. He conceived to himself the idea of striking the cigar from my mouth, but I arrested his hand in time — he did not dishonour me before a lady. 'Enough, sergeant,' I said, 'this has become a question for Mam'sell' Jacqueline.' You understand, monsieur; that is our term for a sabre. 'When I have had the honour to dance once more with Mam'sell' Georgette,' I continued, in an under tone, 'I am at your disposition.' He withdrew, scowling, to join his companions, with each of whom I foresaw an affair. I conducted Mam'sell' Georgette from the alcove, the beer being now finished, and we returned to the dance. I never danced better. 'You will not quarrel on my account?' said Georgette ready to cry. 'Do not dream of it,' I answered. This I was obliged to say. One does not speak the truth in such matters to women. Pardon, madame! Monsieur will readily conceive what followed. In half-an-hour from that time I was engaged in single combat with Sergeant Bousingot. We fought on the sea-shore. That affair was speedily decided. He fell, pierced through the sword-arm, while I remained untouched. My next antagonist was Corporal Bossonville, an old African. This second combat was long and bloody: severe wounds were given on both sides; at last I was the victor. Heedless of my injuries I then engaged a third — this was Crugy, a voltigeur, like myself. Our weapons were both broken: we each lay for dead on the sands, falling at the same moment. I refrain from shocking madame with the particulars. When I regained my senses, I found myself lying on a bed in the military hospital, where also were my three

foes. Now, however, we were all friends again, for blood washes away enmity. At the end of three months, not before, as I had the honour to observe, I cast aside my crutches and took my place on the right of my company. That day was a holiday in the regiment."

"And Mam'sell' Georgette?" I asked. "I suppose she is now the present Madame Jerome!"

"Ah, ah! La Maligne, keep up there!" shouted Monsieur Jerome, giving the mare a sharp cut over the withers.

I repeated my question.

"No," replied Monsieur Jerome, looking a little confused. "Mam'sell' Georgette died of a fever, brought on by anxiety on my account, while I was in the hospital. That catastrophe decided me to renounce a military life: moreover, my period of service had expired. Hi! hi! La Maligne, forward!"

He jumped down at these words and walked in the road beside his mare, leaving us to discuss the narrative which we had just heard.

"What dreadful people those Frenchmen are for fighting!" said my wife.

"Very dreadful!" I answered.

She noticed the tone in which I spoke.

"You don't believe him?" she asked.

"Not a bit," I replied. "From what his wife said this morning, their daughter must be thirteen at least, and this wonderful cutting and slashing occurred, according to his account, only six years ago, before he was married. It is not, however, a bad story to tell: it helps one over the ground."

"Not very much, I imagine; for we seem to me to get on very slowly. How shocking it is that people

should be such story-tellers! I have taken quite a dislike to that man. I hope to gracious he won't upset us."

"That is my least fear, for as you say, we don't travel over fast. Halloa! Jerome! Get up again, and drive on. We shall be all night on the road!"

"Ah, pardon," was his reply. "We are now within sight of Nouvion. We have already accomplished thirteen kilos, and I do not yet intend to bait my horse. At Bernay, seven kilos further, she must have something, and then there remain only twenty-three kilos to Montreuil, where monsieur intends, I suppose, to dine?"

"And when do you think we shall reach Montreuil?"

"O, before six, without doubt, unless anything happens."

"How much is a kilo?" asked my wife. I told her about three-fifths of a mile. She then began to count on her fingers, first three, then five, but it was plain she could make nothing of it, for she shut up her hand in despair. "Whatever they are," she exclaimed, "I am sure we shall never get there!"

Monsieur Jerome did not understand her words, but appeared to catch her meaning.

"Be tranquil, madame," he said, "we shall arrive very soon."

We entered Nouvion, a hamlet of six or seven houses, — one of them a cabaret, with the withered branch of a fir-tree, rusty red, over an inscription which told of the travellers' repose. Monsieur Jerome looked wistfully at the branch, but resisted the temptation; that is to say, he drove past; but his resolution lasted only ten seconds. A few yards further, he pulled up, reminding himself aloud that he had a message to deliver to the proprietor of that cabaret. It must have been almost as long as a

president's message, for it was a good quarter of an hour before he came back. He then made a show of great bustle, cracked his whip, shouted at La Maligne, and expended much breath, impregnated with brandy of not the very best quality. As soon as he got on his seat, he began to talk again, with the intention, apparently, of relating some more adventures, but he roared so loud (some Frenchmen do roar tremendously) that my wife begged me to desire him to be quiet, for his voice "went through her head." Monsieur Jerome interpreted this request as an interdiction on speech only, and forthwith broke out into song, indulging us with the somewhat monotonous history of Cadet Rousselle and his three ruined houses in which the swallows built their nests. That song, with a few intermissions, during which la Maligne was the object of Monsieur Jerome's attention, lasted until we got to Bernay. I looked at my watch and found that it was nearly five o'clock. Twelve miles in four hours, and only a quarter of the distance done! Small chance, thought I, of our getting to Boulogne to-night! And I called myself a fool for supposing such a thing possible. I, however, kept my own counsel for the present, assisted my wife to descend from the coucou, walked with her into the stable-yard, and listened to a long account of the performances of the numerous pigeons which, at that time, used to bring the Stock Exchange expresses from London, on their way to Paris; then we strolled to a slight eminence near the high road, in the hope of getting a distant view of the field of Crecy. Some twenty minutes or so were spent in these occupations, and if we had consumed twenty more, Monsieur Jerome would still have been as far from ready to proceed as when we returned we found him.

La Maligne, he said, could not eat her provender anywhere but in the stable, and had been taken out of the shafts for that purpose. It was a work of time to restore her to that position, and truss her up for farther exertion.

There were cravings of appetite, also, on the part of Monsieur Jerome, which could not be disregarded. In short, a whole hour was frittered away before we resumed our journey.

It was now six o'clock. We might as well have dined, but neither of us was in the humour to do so, though it would have been better to have accepted the landlady's obliging invitation.

"We shall get on famously now!" was Monsieur Jerome's encouraging exclamation, as he drove out of Bernay. And so we did, — for nearly half a hill, — a mountain I should say, — up which it was impossible, as Monsieur Jerome said, for the stoutest horse to trot. La Maligne never tried; but zigzagged leisurely till she gained the summit, where she thought it prudent to rest, before she exerted herself further. At the season of the year when this journey was undertaken, day and night were nearly of an equal length, and half an hour after we left Bernay it got dark. Monsieur Jerome's desire for conversation had returned, but whether he remembered my wife's objection to the loudness of his voice, or subdued it on account of a change of feeling within himself, I cannot exactly say. Certain it is, that his tone was pitched several notes lower; indeed he might be said to be at a much lower pitch altogether, for scarcely a subject arose about which he did not betray some apprehension. If I could have supposed such a thing of the man who had too much courage, I should have said that Mon-

sieur Jerome was afraid of being in the dark. He excused La Maligne for not going at her best pace — whatever that was — on account of the ruts, the stones, the general condition of the road. He invited me, from time to time, to look out, and see if anything was following or approaching, — on the ground that, possibly, my eyes were better than his. When I informed him that I was extremely short-sighted, and could hardly see beyond his horse's ears, he gave way to open lamentation.

The malle-poste, he said, or some other furiously driven carriage, might come tearing along and be down upon us before we knew where we were; in fact, there was no saying what might not happen, and really, unless monsieur was particularly anxious to get on, he thought it would be better for us to turn back at once, and put up for the night at Bernay. He would undertake to say that no time should be lost by this arrangement.

Overlooking for the moment the cool impudence of the proposition, I simply desired him to get on as fast he could, and if he had any doubts as to the safety of the road, to keep them to himself; for, although they did not affect me, they might make the lady uncomfortable. Finding me inflexible on the subject of retracing our steps, he made a virtue of necessity, insulted La Maligne by heaping upon her as many terms of opprobrium as he could think of, and accompanied those insults by a practical application of his whip in a manner that must have been anything but pleasant to the unhappy animal. This mode of proceeding had the effect of keeping up his spirits until we reached Nampont, nine kilos further. Luckily there was no possible excuse for stopping at this village, immortalised, as we all remember, by Sterne's Dead Ass; so we pushed on for Montreuil, evidently our resting-

place for the night. To ourselves it was the most hopeful part of the journey, as every moment brought us nearer to our long-delayed dinner, but that was not the case with Monsieur Jerome. He had become the prey of far worse apprehensions than the chance of being run down in the dark, and did not hesitate to communicate them to me when, having wrapped up my wife in a large cloak, and disposed her for a nap in the recesses of the coucou, I took a seat in front by his side. I believe I provoked the disclosure of his thoughts, by asking him casually if there were many wolves in that part of the country. He replied that in winter they abounded, particularly in a certain large wood called the Bois Jean, which we should shortly come to; but that he did not care for wolves, as they only showed themselves in the depths of winter, and luckily that season was gone by, though he admitted, and, as it seemed to me, in no very assured tone, that "those beasts were very fond of horse-flesh, and might be tempted by it at any time." He made a pause after this dark allusion to the possible fate of La Maligne, but presently added:

"After all, one might keep them off, perhaps, with one's whip, or frighten them away by shouting; but there are other customers on this part of the road, sometimes, not so easily got rid of."

I asked him what kind of customers he meant? Not robbers, surely?

In a voice scarcely above a whisper, he begged me to speak lower. That, in effect, was it. There had been terrible doings in that neighbourhood. At Verton, about half a league off the high road on the left hand side — we could see the place easily in the day-time; he wished he saw it now — the château had been broken into, the

year before, by a ferocious band, who, it was known, or suspected, still haunted thereabouts. He had heard that a garde champêtre had once been murdered in the hollow there at l'Epine, which, thank God! we had just passed. He should not care a straw for a dozen robbers at a time, if he could only see them, but when they came upon you unawares —

"Good night!" cried a voice close to Monsieur Jerome's ear, before he could conclude the sentence. He dropped both reins and whip, and nearly fell backward into the coucou. It was a mounted gendarme on his way towards Bernay, whose approach had been concealed by the darkness. I returned the man's salutation — fear had completely taken away all power of speech from Monsieur Jerome — and he rode on. La Maligne had taken advantage of the loose rein to stop. I told Monsieur Jerome to get down and pick up his whip, but he did not offer to stir. At last he whispered, "One of those fellows!"

I explained who it was, having been quite near enough to see.

"Ah, why did not monsieur tell him that before? So it was one of the *lepins ferrés*" (a popular name for the gendarmes). "Yes, he would soon pick up his whip. What a pity the fellow was going the other way! He would, after all, have been some company. Besides, they were always armed."

Monsieur Jerome speedily recovered his property, and again we moved on. I could perceive through the indistinctness of the night that we were skirting a wood; doubtless, the terrible Bois Jean, for not a word did our valiant driver utter — not a single malediction did he bestow on La Maligne. On a sudden, a gleam of light

shot up in the distance, and as speedily disappeared. Monsieur Jerome observed it, and exclaimed that it was the malle-poste coming.

Yes, it was the time he expected it to appear. It did not carry many passengers — only two besides the conducteur — but then there was the postilion, he made four; and four people could make a good stand against anybody who attacked them. The malle-poste would soon be very near, but before it came up we should, he hoped, have left this accursed wood behind us, and then the road was open all the way to Montreuil. Hi, hi! la Maligne. En avant!

I could perceive that Monsieur Jerome was straining his eyes to get another glimpse of the malle-poste lamps, and presently another gleam appeared. He was greatly rejoiced, and gave vent to his exultation so noisily that my wife woke up and looked about her. She asked what was the matter? I told her what Monsieur Jerome expected. In about a minute the light showed itself again. "There!" said I.

"That is not a carriage-lamp," returned my wife, whose eyesight was remarkable; "that is lightning! I have seen several flashes."

As she spoke in French, Monsieur Jerome understood her. He would wager anything it was not lightning. It must be the malle-poste; it could not be anything else. At last there came a terrific peal of thunder; and, sorely against his will, he became convinced that a storm was approaching, and not the malle-poste. I think he would have pulled up at once if he had dared, but the dreaded contents of the Bois Jean impelled him onward; and, as I knew he had no choice, I left him to be pelted on by the rain, while I went back to the interior of the coucou.

It was but a slight punishment for his cowardice — nothing, indeed, to a fellow accustomed to all weathers, if it had not been accompanied at every step by the direst misgivings as to being waylaid and murdered.

I need not say that no such tragical event occurred. We jolted along, too slowly for our impatient hunger — far too slowly for the fears of Monsieur Jerome. But everything comes to an end at last, even a journey in a French coucou; and, within a quarter of an hour of midnight, other coruscations than those of the elements were visible. They proved to be the lights of Montreuil; and, amidst such an amount of whip-cracking and shouting as had not been heard in that town for many a day, we drove across the drawbridge, passed through the fortifications, traversed the square, and closed our pilgrimage at the door of the Hôtel de la Cour de France.

The woodcock pie on which we supped, the excellent Bordeaux in which we drank each other's healths, the admirable bed we slept in, the capital breakfast with which we fortified ourselves next morning, need not be recorded. Neither is it necessary to describe any further particulars of our journey; but it may be as well to mention, lest a notion to the contrary should prevail, that — with returning daylight and nothing to fear — Monsieur Jerome once more showed himself to be a man of courage.

MRS. BADGERY.

Is there any law in England which will protect me from Mrs. Badgery?

I am a bachelor, and Mrs. Badgery is a widow. Let nobody rashly imagine that I am about to relate a common-place grievance, because I have suffered that first sentence to escape my pen. My objection to Mrs. Badgery is, not that she is too fond of me, but that she is too fond of the memory of her late husband. She has not attempted to marry me; she would not think of marrying me, even if I asked her. Understand, therefore, if you please, at the outset, that my grievance in relation to this widow lady is a grievance of an entirely new kind.

Let me begin again. I am a bachelor of a certain age. I have a large circle of acquaintance; but I solemnly declare that the late Mr. Badgery was never numbered on the list of my friends. I never heard of him in my life; I never knew that he had left a relict; I never set eyes on Mrs. Badgery until one fatal morning when I went to see if the fixtures were all right in my new house.

My new house is in the suburbs of London. I looked at it, liked it, took it. Three times I visited it before I sent my furniture in. Once with a friend, once with a surveyor, once by myself, to throw a sharp eye, as I

have already intimated, over the fixtures. The third visit marked the fatal occasion on which I first saw Mrs. Badgery. A deep interest attaches to this event, and I shall go into details in describing it.

I rang at the bell of the garden-door. The old woman appointed to keep the house answered it. I directly saw something strange and confused in her face and manner. Some men would have pondered a little and questioned her. I am by nature impetuous and a rusher at conclusions. "Drunk," I said to myself, and walked on into the house perfectly satisfied.

I looked into the front parlour. Grate all right, curtain-pole all right, gas chandelier all right. I looked into the back parlour — ditto, ditto, ditto, as we men of business say. I mounted the stairs. Blind on back window right? Yes; blind on back window right. I opened the door of the front drawing-room — and there, sitting in the middle of the bare floor, was a large woman on a little campstool! She was dressed in the deepest mourning, her face was hidden by the thickest crape veil I ever saw, and she was groaning softly to herself in the desolate solitude of my new unfurnished house.

What did I do? Do! I bounced back into the landing as if I had been shot, uttering the national exclamation of terror and astonishment: "Hullo!" (And here I particularly beg, in parenthesis, that the printer will follow my spelling of the word, and not put Hillo, or Halloa, instead, both of which are base compromises which represent no sound that ever yet issued from any Englishman's lips.) I said, "Hullo!" and then I turned round fiercely upon the old woman who kept the house, and said "Hullo!" again.

She understood the irresistible appeal that I had made to her feelings, and curtsied, and looked towards the drawing-room, and humbly hoped that I was not startled or put out. I asked who the crape-covered woman on the camp-stool was, and what she wanted there. Before the old woman could answer, the soft groaning in the drawing-room ceased, and a muffled voice, speaking from behind the crape veil, addressed me reproachfully, and said:

"I am the widow of the late Mr. Badgery."

What did I say in answer? Exactly the words which, I flatter myself, any other sensible man in my situation would have said. And what words were they? These two:

"Oh, indeed!"

"Mr. Badgery and myself were the last tenants who inhabited this house," continued the muffled voice. "Mr. Badgery died here." The voice ceased, and the soft groans began again.

It was perhaps not necessary to answer this; but I did answer it. How? In one word:

"Ha!"

"Our house has been long empty," resumed the voice, choked by sobs. "Our establishment has been broken up. Being left in reduced circumstances, I now live in a cottage near; but it is not home to me. This is home. However long I live, wherever I go, whatever changes may happen to this beloved house, nothing can ever prevent me from looking on it as *my* home. I came here, sir, with Mr. Badgery after our honey-moon. All the brief happiness of my life was once contained within these four walls. Every dear remembrance that I fondly cherish is shut up in these sacred rooms."

Again the voice ceased, and again the soft groans echoed round my empty walls, and oozed out past me down my uncarpeted staircase.

I reflected. Mrs. Badgery's brief happiness and dear remembrances were not included in the list of fixtures. Why could she not take them away with her? Why should she leave them littered about in the way of my furniture? I was just thinking how I could put this view of the case strongly to Mrs. Badgery, when she suddenly left off groaning, and addressed me once more.

"While this house has been empty," she said, "I have been in the habit of looking in from time to time, and renewing my tender associations with the place. I have lived, as it were, in the sacred memories of Mr. Badgery and of the past, which these dear, these priceless rooms call up, dismantled and dusty as they are at the present moment. It has been my practice to give a remuneration to the attendant for any slight trouble that I might occasion —"

"Only sixpence, sir," whispered the old woman, close at my ear.

"And to ask nothing in return," continued Mrs. Badgery, "but the permission to bring my camp-stool with me, and to meditate on Mr. Badgery in the empty rooms, with every one of which some happy thought, or eloquent word, or tender action of his, is so sweetly associated. I came here on my usual errand to-day. I am discovered, I presume, by the new proprietor of the house — discovered, I am quite ready to admit, as an intruder. I am willing to go, if you wish it after hearing my explanation. My heart is full, sir; I am quite incapable of contending with you. You would hardly think it, but I

am sitting on the spot once occupied by our ottoman. I am looking towards the window in which my flower-stand once stood. In this very place, Mr. Badgery first sat down and clasped me to his heart, when we came back from our honey-moon trip. 'Matilda,' he said, 'your drawing-room has been expensively papered, carpeted, and furnished for a month; but it has only been adorned, love, since you entered it.' If you have no sympathy, sir, for such remembrances as these; if you see nothing pitiable in my position, taken in connection with my presence here; if you cannot enter into my feelings, and thoroughly understand that this is not a house, but a Shrine — you have only to say so, and I am quite willing to go."

She spoke with the air of a martyr — a martyr to my insensibility. If she had been the proprietor and I had been the intruder, she could not have been more mournfully magnanimous. All this time, too, she never raised her veil — she never has raised it, in my presence, from that time to this. I have no idea whether she is young or old, dark or fair, handsome or ugly: my impression is, that she is in every respect a finished and perfect Gorgon, but I have no basis of fact on which I can support that dismal idea. A moving mass of crape, and a muffled voice — that, if you drive me to it, is all I know, in a personal point of view, of Mrs. Badgery.

"Ever since my irreparable loss, this has been the shrine of my pilgrimage, and the altar of my worship," proceeded the voice. "One man may call himself a landlord, and say that he will let it; another man may call himself a tenant, and say that he will take it. I don't blame either of those two men; I don't wish to intrude

on either of those two men; I only tell them that this is my home; that my heart is still in possession, and that no mortal laws, landlords, or tenants can ever turn it out. If you don't understand this, sir; if the holiest feelings that do honour to our common nature have no particular sanctity in your estimation, pray do not scruple to say so; pray tell me to go."

"I don't wish to do anything uncivil, ma'am," said I. "But I am a single man, and I am not sentimental." (Mrs. Badgery groaned.) "Nobody told me I was coming into a Shrine when I took this house; nobody warned me, when I first went over it, that there was a Heart in possession. I regret to have disturbed your meditations, and I am sorry to hear that Mr. Badgery is dead. That is all I have to say about it; and, now, with your kind permission, I will do myself the honour of wishing you good morning, and will go up-stairs to look after the fixtures on the second floor."

Could I have given a gentler hint than this? Could I have spoken more compassionately to a woman whom I sincerely believe to be old and ugly? Where is the man to be found who can lay his hand on his heart, and honestly say that he ever really pitied the sorrows of a Gorgon? Search through the whole surface of the globe; and you will discover human phenomena of all sorts, but you will not find that man.

To resume. I made her a bow, and left her on the camp-stool, in the middle of the drawing-room floor, exactly as I had found her. I ascended to the second floor, walked into the back room first, and inspected the grate. It appeared to be a little out of repair, so I stooped down to look at it closer. While I was kneeling over the bars, I was violently startled by the fall of one

large drop of warm water, from a great height, exactly in the middle of a bald place, which has been widening a great deal of late years on the top of my head. I turned on my knees, and looked round. Heaven and earth! the crape-covered woman had followed me upstairs — the source from which the drop of warm water had fallen was no other than Mrs. Badgery's eye.

"I wish you could contrive not to cry over the top of my head, ma'am," said I. My patience was becoming exhausted, and I spoke with considerable asperity. The curly-headed youth of the present age may not be able to sympathise with my feelings on this occasion; but my bald brethren know, as well as I do, that the most unpardonable of all liberties is a liberty taken with the unguarded top of the human head.

Mrs. Badgery did not seem to hear me. When she had dropped the tear, she was standing exactly over me, looking down at the grate; and she never stirred an inch after I had spoken. "Don't cry over my head, ma'am," I repeated, more irritably than before.

"This was his dressing-room," said Mrs. Badgery, indulging in muffled soliloquy. "He was singularly particular about his shavingwater. He always liked to have it in a little tin pot, and he invariably desired that it might be placed on this hob." She groaned again, and tapped one side of the grate with the leg of her camp-stool.

If I had been a woman, or if Mrs. Badgery had been a man, I should now have proceeded to extremities, and should have vindicated my right to my own house by an appeal to physical force. Under existing circumstances, all that I could do was to express my indignation by a

glance. The glance produced not the slightest result — and no wonder. Who can look at a woman with any effect, through a crape veil?

I retreated into the second-floor front room, and instantly shut the door after me. The next moment I heard the rustling of the crape garments outside, and the muffled voice of Mrs. Badgery poured lamentably through the keyhole.

“Do you mean to make that your bed-room?” asked the voice on the other side of the door. “Oh, don’t, don’t make that your bedroom! I am going away directly — but, oh pray, pray let that one room be sacred! Don’t sleep there! If you can possibly help it, don’t sleep there!”

I opened the window, and looked up and down the road. If I had seen a policeman within hail I should certainly have called him in. No such person was visible. I shut the window again, and warned Mrs. Badgery, through the door, in my sternest tones, not to interfere with my domestic arrangements. “I mean to have my bedstead put up here,” I said. “And what is more, I mean to sleep here. And, what is more, I mean to snore here!” Severe, I think, that last sentence? It completely crushed Mrs. Badgery for the moment. I heard the crape garments rustling away from the door; I heard the muffled groans going slowly and solemnly down the stairs again.

In due course of time, I also descended to the ground-floor. Had Mrs. Badgery really left the premises? I looked into the front parlour — empty. Back parlour — empty. Any other room on the ground-floor? Yes; a long room at the end of the passage. The door was closed. I opened it cautiously, and peeped in. A faint

scream, and a smack of two distractedly-clasped hands saluted my appearance. There she was, again on the camp-stool, again sitting exactly in the middle of the floor.

"Don't, don't look in, in that way!" cried Mrs. Badgery, wringing her hands. "I could bear it in any other room, but I can't bear it in this. Every Monday morning I looked out the things for the wash in this room. He was difficult to please about his linen; the washerwoman never put starch enough into his collars to satisfy him. Oh, how often and often has he popped his head in here, as you popped yours just now; and said, in his amusing way, 'More starch!' Oh, how droll he always was — how very, very droll in this dear little back room!"

I said nothing. The situation had now got beyond words. I stood with the door in my hand, looking down the passage towards the garden, and waiting doggedly for Mrs. Badgery to go out. My plan succeeded. She rose, sighed, shut up the camp-stool, stalked along the passage, paused on the hall mat, said to herself, "Sweet, sweet spot!" descended the steps, groaned along the gravel-walk, and disappeared from view at last through the garden-door.

"Let her in again at your peril," said I to the woman who kept the house. She courtseyed and trembled. I left the premises, satisfied with my own conduct under very trying circumstances, delusively convinced also that I had done with Mrs. Badgery.

The next day I sent in the furniture. The most unprotected object on the face of this earth is a house when the furniture is going in. The doors must be kept open; and employ as many servants as you may, nobody

can be depended on as a domestic sentry so long as the van is at the gate. The confusion of "moving in" demoralises the steadiest disposition, and there is no such thing as a properly-guarded post from the top of the house to the bottom. How the invasion was managed, how the surprise was effected, I know not; but it is certainly the fact, that when my furniture went in, the inevitable Mrs. Badgery went in along with it.

I have some very choice engravings after the old masters; and I was first awakened to a consciousness of Mrs. Badgery's presence in the house while I was hanging up my proof impression of Titian's Venus over the front parlour fire-place. "Not there!" cried the muffled voice imploringly. "*His* portrait used to hang there. Oh, what a print — what a dreadful, dreadful print to put where *his* dear portrait used to be!" I turned round in a fury. There she was, still muffled up in crape, still carrying her abominable camp-stool. Before I could say a word in remonstrance, six men in green baize aprons staggered in with my sideboard, and Mrs. Badgery suddenly disappeared. Had they trampled her under foot, or crushed her in the doorway? Though not an inhuman man by nature, I asked myself those questions quite composedly. No very long time elapsed before they were practically answered in the negative by the reappearance of Mrs. Badgery herself, in a perfectly unruffled condition of chronic grief. In the course of the day I had my toes trodden on, I was knocked about by my own furniture, the six men in baize aprons dropped all sorts of small articles over me in going up and down stairs; but Mrs. Badgery escaped unscathed. Every time I thought she had been turned out of the house she

proved, on the contrary, to be groaning close behind me. She wept over Mr. Badgery's memory in every room, perfectly undisturbed to the last, by the chaotic confusion of moving in. I am not sure, but I think she brought a tin box of sandwiches with her, and celebrated a tearful pic-nic of her own in the groves of my front garden. I say I am not sure of this; but I am positively certain that I never entirely got rid of her all day; and I know to my cost that she insisted on making me as well acquainted with Mr. Badgery's favourite notions and habits as I am with my own. It may interest the reader if I report that my taste in carpets is not equal to Mr. Badgery's; that my ideas on the subject of servants' wages are not so generous as Mr. Badgery's; and that I ignorantly persisted in placing a sofa in the position which Mr. Badgery, in his time, considered to be particularly fitted for an arm-chair. I could go nowhere, look nowhere, do nothing, say nothing, all that day, without bringing the widowed incubus in the crape garments down upon me immediately. I tried civil remonstrances, I tried rude speeches, I tried sulky silence — nothing had the least effect on her. The memory of Mr. Badgery was the shield of proof with which she warded off my fiercest attacks. Not till the last article of furniture had been moved in, did I lose sight of her; and even then she had not really left the house. One of my six men in green baize aprons routed her out of the back-garden area, where she was telling my servants, with floods of tears, of Mr. Badgery's virtuous strictness with his housemaid in the matter of followers. My admirable man in green baize courageously saw her out, and shut the garden-door after her. I gave him half-a-

crown on the spot; and if anything happens to him, I am ready to make the future prosperity of his fatherless family my own peculiar care.

The next day was Sunday. I attended morning service at my new parish church. A popular preacher had been announced, and the building was crowded. I advanced a little way up the nave, and looked to my right, and saw no room. Before I could look to my left, I felt a hand laid persuasively on my arm. I turned round — and there was Mrs. Badgery, with her pew-door open, solemnly beckoning me in. The crowd had closed up behind me; the eyes of a dozen members of the congregation, at least, were fixed on me. I had no choice but to save appearances, and accept the dreadful invitation. There was a vacant place next to the door of the pew. I tried to drop into it, but Mrs. Badgery stopped me. “*His seat,*” she whispered, and signed to me to place myself on the other side of her. It is unnecessary to say that I had to climb over a hassock, and that I knocked down all Mrs. Badgery’s devotional books before I succeeded in passing between her and the front of the pew. She cried uninterruptedly through the service; composed herself when it was over; and began to tell me what Mr. Badgery’s opinions had been on points of abstract theology. Fortunately there was great confusion and crowding at the door of the church; and I escaped, at the hazard of my life, by running round the back of the carriages. I passed the interval between the services alone in the fields, being deterred from going home by the fear that Mrs. Badgery might have got there before me.

Monday came. I positively ordered my servants to let no lady in deep mourning pass inside the garden-

door, without first consulting me. After that, feeling tolerably secure, I occupied myself in arranging my books and prints. I had not pursued this employment much more than an hour, when one of the servants burst excitably into the room, and informed me that a lady in deep mourning had been taken faint, just outside my door, and had requested leave to come in and sit down for a few moments. I ran down the garden-path to bolt the door, and arrived just in time to see it violently pushed open by an officious and sympathising crowd. They drew away on either side as they saw me. There she was, leaning on the grocer's shoulder, with the butcher's boy in attendance, carrying her camp-stool! Leaving my servants to do what they liked with her, I ran back and locked myself up in my bedroom. When she evacuated the premises, some hours afterwards, I received a message of apology, informing me that this particular Monday was the sad anniversary of her wedding-day, and that she had been taken faint, in consequence, at the sight of her lost husband's house.

Tuesday forenoon passed away happily, without any new invasion. After lunch, I thought I would go out and take a walk. My garden-door has a sort of peephole in it, covered with a wire grating. As I got close to this grating, I thought I saw something mysteriously dark on the outer side of it. I bent my head down to look through, and instantly found myself face to face with the crape veil. "Sweet, sweet spot!" said the muffled voice, speaking straight into my eyes through the grating. The usual groans followed, and the name of Mr. Badgery was plaintively pronounced before I could recover myself sufficiently to retreat to the house.

Wednesday is the day on which I am writing this narrative. It is not twelve o'clock yet, and there is every probability that some new form of sentimental persecution is in store for me before the evening. Thus far, these lines contain a perfectly true statement of Mrs. Badgery's conduct towards me since I entered on the possession of my house and her shrine. What am I to do? — that is the point I wish to insist on — what am I to do? How am I to get away from the memory of Mr. Badgery, and the unappeasable grief of his disconsolate widow? Any other species of invasion it is possible to resist; but how is a man placed in my unhappy and unparalleled circumstances to defend himself? I can't keep a dog ready to fly at Mrs. Badgery. I can't charge her at a police-court with being oppressively fond of the house in which her husband died. I can't set mantraps for a woman, or prosecute a weeping widow as a trespasser and a nuisance. I am helplessly involved in the unrelaxing folds of Mrs. Badgery's crape veil. Surely there was no exaggeration in my language when I said that I was a sufferer under a perfectly new grievance! Can anybody advise me? Has anybody had even the faintest and remotest experience of the peculiar form of persecution under which I am now suffering? If nobody has, is there any legal gentleman in the united kingdom who can answer the all-important question which appears at the head of this narrative? I began by asking that question because it was uppermost in my mind. It is uppermost in my mind still, and I therefore beg leave to conclude appropriately by asking it again:

Is there any law in England which will protect me from Mrs. Badgery?

OUR FAMILY PICTURE.

CHAPTER I.

OTHER heir-looms have come down to me — the large family Bible, my father's heavy old-fashioned watch, a set of china that belonged to my mother — but, much as I value those dear relics, none of them are so dear to me as our family picture.

It has hung above my chimney-piece these many years, shedding a benignant influence over a hearth long solitary and deserted. I know not why my thoughts should dwell on it to-night more than they usually do, nor why my memory should at this time, more than any other, take to itself wings, and live again, for a brief while, in the pleasant days of my youth; except that this is the anniversary of an event too sorrowful even to be forgotten by me, which the picture serves to bring more vividly before my mind.

It cannot boast of a very superb frame, this dear old picture; and many people would pronounce it to be little better than a daub; for although the faces are beautifully and carefully finished, each being a striking individual likeness, yet the drapery of the figures, and the accessories, have rather a blotchy and slovenly appearance on close inspection. It was painted, half a century ago, by a wandering artist — a man of talent, certainly, but a drunkard, as I have been told — who disappeared from the town before he had quite finished

it, having persuaded my father to pay him in advance. Time has imparted to it a rich mellow tint, turning the white into light yellow, and deepening the shadows.

It represents my father and mother, their five children, and my cousin, Philip Delmer. The first thing about it that attracts the attention of strangers is the quaint attire of the figures. It makes one smile to see how the children of those days were dressed; the elder boys in nankeen vests, and trowsers of the same, short enough to display their ankles; short-waisted, high-collared, swallow-tailed blue coats with bright buttons; high black stocks, frilled shirt bosoms, white socks and pumps; the younger lads in jacket suits of blue. But the girls are the oddest figures. My sister Ruth, who may be taken as a pattern of the rest, is represented as a tall, thin girl, with her waist two inches below her armpits; clad in a low-bosomed, short-sleeved, white robe, rather scanty in length, with none of that voluminous width of skirt in which the young ladies of the present day delight — leaving visible two pretty feet covered with red morocco shoes. The hair, both of girls and boys, is cut short, and combed straight down over the forehead without either parting or curl, giving them a strangely quiet, puritanical look. The principal figure in the picture is my father, seated, as I well remember him, in his chair of black oak, with a volume of Tacitus on his knees, and his silver snuff-box in one hand. The artist has caught his expression admirably. There is a long, thin, scholar-like face, on which the memory of a smile seems still to linger; the black hair, prematurely thin and grey about the temples; the very stoop is preserved. The dress is such as he usually wore — black coat, the collar reaching to his ears; black small-clothes.

nankeen vest, silk stockings, and shoes with large silver buckles, with just a hint of the queue that hung straight down his shoulders behind. My mother comes next — portly and comfortable in person, cheerful and good-tempered in countenance, as the mother of such a family ought to be. She is painted in her wedding-dress, a silver-grey silk. A muslin kerchief, fastened with a gold pin, and surmounted by a thick crimped frill, covers her neck and bosom; on her head is a close-fitting cap, peaked up somewhat at the crown, which I am not skilful enough to describe, but only worn, as I remember, on Sundays and days of high state and ceremony. Six short glossy curls crown her forehead. Without these curls I should hardly recognise my mother, for they were as much a part of herself as her good temper or her pleasant smile. I never remember her without them; for, even in after life, when the rest of her hair had become thin and grey, the six short curls still shone, firm and glossy, above her silver-rimmed spectacles.

My father, Amos Redfern, was master of the only grammar school in the little town of Dingwell. It was a private foundation, the result of a bequest by one John Dalrymple, alderman and twice mayor of Dingwell; who, dying without issue in the year fifteen hundred and sixty-two, and having no relatives to whom to bequeath his fortune, left it for the endowment of a grammar school for the education of thirty poor boys of his native town. But the trustees of the charity, in the course of the next generation, wiser than simple John Dalrymple, and considering that poor boys are better without a knowledge of grammar, determined to send their own sons, and the sons of their wealthy friends, to

partake of the mental loaves and fishes thus gratuitously provided; so for a long time before my father became master, it had been considered as the fashionable preparatory school of the district. My father often deplored his inability to remedy this abuse; although in the course of his long career he did contrive to smuggle into the school three or four poor boys whose abilities had attracted his attention, by interesting some of the more charitable of the trustees in their behalf, but not without risking the favour of many powerful friends.

There was one anecdote that my father was fond of relating, with that quiet humour which was the nearest approach to mirth he ever indulged in. He had succeeded, after much trouble and opposition, in filling up one of the vacancies in the school with a poor but quick-witted lad, the son of a journeyman shoemaker of the town. A day or two after the election, a certain rich Mrs. Savory, whose handsome son, Adolphus George, was at that time one of my father's scholars, paid him a visit of expostulation. She swept into the study, all satin and musk, as my father used to say, and seating herself, haughtily desired to have an explanation of my father's extraordinary conduct, and demanded the immediate expulsion of the shoemaker's son. My father heard her quietly to the end, and then unlocking his bureau, drew from its recesses a roll of yellow, timeworn parchment, and unfolding it before the great lady, pointed to certain passages therein, and read, in a low distinct voice, the whole of the clause relating to the thirty poor boys. Mrs. Savory rustled her satins and feathers, pressed her handkerchief to her nose, said that it was a most extraordinary circumstance, remarked that the weather was very fine for the season, and that she

should be happy to see my father to dinner; and sailing slowly out of the room, was assisted into her carriage, and quietly disappeared. It was this same shoemaker's son who afterwards won so many honours at the university, and finally became one of the most celebrated preachers of the day.

Our house, which was a large, old-fashioned, inconvenient residence, was separated from the school by a considerable piece of ground, — half garden, half orchard. My father was no gardener; but my mother, with the aid of an old man one day in the week and the forcible impressment of any idle lads she could catch about the premises, contrived to keep it in a very tolerable state of cultivation; as we children grew up, half our leisure hours were spent in it, and in our youthful eyes it was ever a most wonderful place. There were fruits in abundance of nearly every kind that will grow in England in the open air, and as my mother considered herself a woman of some taste, flowers were not neglected, though they were mostly of an old-fashioned and stately kind, such as sun-flowers, hollyhocks, cabbage-roses, sweet-williams, and gillyflowers. But the gooseberry and currant-trees were the pride of my mother's heart; and certainly I have never seen elsewhere fruit equal in size and flavour to that I was used to at home.

If my mother could be said to be possessed by a mania for anything, it was for making preserves, which, as we had always a superabundance of fruit, she was enabled to indulge to her heart's content. As the preserving season approached, we always noticed that my mother's temper grew slightly acrimonious, that she gave sharp answers to pacific questions, and that the kitchen

was dangerous ground. Pickles, she would observe, might be a responsibility, and home-made wines a serious undertaking; but their weight on her mind was nothing in comparison to that imposed by preserves. She had a secret connected with the boiling of them, which her mother had bequeathed to her on her death-bed — a spell or incantation, we children thought it; though what it really was I never learnt, having no occasion to make use of such knowledge. But when the last jar was filled and covered, all the sugar of my mother's good-nature came back in a lump, and we might have lived on preserves for the next six months, if such a diet would have agreed with our constitutions. Then followed a short but busy season of packing-up, when immense jars had to be sent off to remote aunts and cousins — whose addresses we scarcely knew — and to a host of other people who claimed us as friends. The people of Dingwell came in for their share in the general distribution, not forgetting many poor families, and the old widows in the almshouse.

I speak of these things as I remember them when a lad; but it now becomes necessary to go back a little farther still. My poor father and mother had been married for ten years before they had any children; but, at the end of that time, two came together, as if to make up for the long delay — my brother Neville and my sister Ruth. As some years elapsed after this startling event, without any likelihood of a further increase to his family, my father sketched in his mind a plan of education for these two, which he determined they should pursue together. It may appear singular that he should wish to give his daughter the same education as his son; but that was one of his minor

crotchets, though based, indeed, upon his principal one.

My father being the head of a grammar-school was, as a matter of course, a good classical scholar, in fact, no one could have been better fitted for such a situation, for not only was he acquainted with all the extant literature of Greece and Rome, but he loved and admired the ancient authors to an extent that was almost fanatical. In all school labours that had no connection with the classics he was invariably kind and indulgent in the extreme; but when the ancients came in question, he at once became stern and inflexible, and woe to any wretched wight who stuttered over his conjugations, or stumbled in his declensions. Long crabbed tasks were in certain store for him, and the cane was not always spared. Yet the lads loved him for his simplicity and good-nature in everything else. He used to carry marbles in his pocket, which he would distribute to unfortunate gamesters who had lost their all; and he was always ready to mend any broken toy or instrument of amusement far better than the lads themselves could do it. He was not very particular, either, on the subject of caricatures, of which several personal ones adorned the walls of the school. There was one which represented him as crushed to a pancake beneath a pyramid of ancient authors. In another he was represented as a conjuror, about to swallow the ancients bodily, in the form of a string of sausages; while a third depicted him, attired in a toga, flogging a youth, who was weeping very blotchy tears, up the side of an almost perpendicular hill — Parnassus, I presume.

But while my father was pluming himself with the idea of employing his future leisure hours in imparting

to his two children a sound classical education, the tenor of his meditations was disturbed by the birth of another son — I, Caleb Redfern, to wit; and the catalogue was closed by the birth, at brief intervals, of my sisters, Helen and Kate.

My father took more snuff than ever — grew fonder of the society of the gentlemen of the toga, and did with one suit of clothes less a year. My mother no longer gave away her old gowns, and had a sharper eye after affairs in the kitchen.

I have mentioned my cousin, Philip Delmer, as forming one of the group in our family-picture. He was the only child of my father's only sister. Both his parents died at Jamaica, of yellow fever, when he was only two years old. A short time before he died, my uncle contrived to pen a few broken lines, bequeathing Philip to the care of his brother-in-law, in England, and the child arrived at our house some six months afterwards, having been brought over in charge of a captain's wife. My parents received the little stranger as though he were another child of their own; and he grew up among us, treated in every respect as one of ourselves.

Neville alone was disposed to regard him with a somewhat jealous eye, and to consider that he usurped the place which he himself should have held in his parents' affections; an opinion most unfounded. Philip was nearly two years older than Neville, and his abilities were certainly superior to those of my brother; he got on better at school, and put Neville's humble acquirements into the shade: a fact which, probably, first induced Neville to regard him with jealousy and distrust. As a boy, Philip was grave and quiet beyond his years, with a manner cold and haughty towards all except those

with whom he was very intimate, so that he was not generally liked; but we who lived in daily communion with him, felt and appreciated his really fine qualities. To my parents he was most dutiful and loving; no son could have been more so.

The first shadow that darkened our hitherto happy hearth was the death of my little sister Kaste. I was six years old at that time. A short and painful illness, a calm death, and a solemn funeral, when the snow lay thick on the ground. How it affected us all! For long afterwards, through the dark frost nights of that winter, in the more cheerful nights of spring, and even in the hot windless nights of summer, we children used to whisper to each other about the strange mystery of death, and wonder what the heaven was like where they told us little Katie now lived; and whether she ever watched the bright stars, as we did, when they glinted in through our bedroom window.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN I go back in memory to the period of my childhood, it seems to me to be marked by certain epochs or points of time, which, owing to some circumstance or event that impressed me at the moment of its occurrence, still live vividly in my recollections, and raise themselves above the dull surface by which they are surrounded. Like scattered lamps, seen on a dark night, they shine, showing here and there a speck of brightness, while the wide spaces intervening are full of vague shadows and dim forms, that need the daylight to form them into familiar things. With such an epoch,

which claims to itself a prominent place in my recollections, I have now to deal.

It was little Olive Graile's birthday. Olive, only child of Doctor Graile, oldest medical practitioner in Dingwell; and there was to be a children's party to celebrate the event. We were all invited, as a matter of course; for the doctor and my father were very intimate, and Olive was a frequent visitor at our house. We children were to go early in the afternoon, and our parents were to follow, so as to be in time for tea. It was a bleak day, towards the end of October — a windy day withal, as I remember, seeing that it required the united strength of Helen and myself to close the heavy front door after us as we went out. The sere leaves were blown thickly round our heads as we walked down the lane; and Philip and Neville went scouring off with merry shouts, chasing them as they fell from the trees. Helen seemed, from her eyes, as if she would like to join them, but restrained herself, clasping her hands tightly in her muff, and walking on in silence like a staid little princess.

Ruth took my hand in hers, and walked beside me all the way; for I was only just recovering from a severe cold, and still wore a piece of flannel round my neck, which I was pained to think I should be unable to hide from the strange children at Doctor Graile's. Perhaps they might laugh at me! What should I do in such a case? I felt myself blushing to the eyes with shame when I thought of it.

Doctor Graile received us in his merry, kindly way, at the door. He picked me out in a moment. "Well, young gentleman," said he, "how do you feel to-day? Better, eh? Almost too cold for you to venture out. You

look sadly blue and pinched about the nose. The rest of you can bundle up-stairs into the play-room, where you will find Olive and lots more friends; but Caleb, you must come with me into the parlour." He had felt my wrist, looked at my tongue, and chucked me under the chin by this time. I followed him with some trepidation. Would Mrs. Graile notice the piece of flannel round my neck? I hoped not.

In another moment I was in the presence of that imposing lady. She was one of the tallest women I have ever seen, but very spare and bony; to hide which defects as much as possible she used to dress in black velvet, with an amount of padding and an amplitude of skirt that scandalised the ladies of those days. Still, the sterile nature of the ground would show itself here and there — in the bony knuckles and joints of her fingers, for instance, which no black silk mits could quite conceal, — in the protruding shoulder-blades, in the prominent cheek-bones, and in the frosty aquiline nose, thrust up like a thin ridge of slate between the flinty depths of her eyes. She ruled over the little doctor most imperiously, a fact observable even to a child like me. What little individuality he had ever possessed had been absorbed long ago in her more powerful nature. But what could be expected from such a frail, shadowy little man — from such a flutteringly polite man, with his thin hair and whiskers of a weak straw colour, as though they had once been red, but were having the colour gradually washed out of them, — with his blue coat buttoned tightly round his spare person, the collar invariably sticking out several inches, as though an invisible hand were clutching him from behind, — from such a shrill-voiced piping little man, who, when he

had nothing better to do, would sit by the hour, gently rubbing the palms of his hands together, as though he were making imaginary pills? Mrs. Graile's expectations were evidently of a limited character. She thought the best thing that could be done was to keep him under. Therefore, keep him under she did.

"This is little Caleb Redfern, my dear," pushing me gently by the shoulders before him, as a sort of breast-work, under cover of which he might approach the enemy in safety.

Mrs. Graile was busily engaged on some elaborate piece of needlework. She glanced down severely as her husband spoke.

"Why bring him in here?" she asked, speaking from among the glaciers, where she seemed habitually to reside, so chilling was her voice, so cold and lofty her manner.

"He is not well, my love," said the doctor, deprecatingly. "I thought he had better sit by the fire for a few minutes, and warm himself before going upstairs. Indeed, I think a glass of wine would do him good."

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Mrs. Graile, with severity. "I don't agree with people coddling up children in such a foolish manner. I hope you rubbed your feet, little boy, before coming into the room?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Try to speak up, next time you are asked a question. Well, sir?" to her husband, "why don't you find the child a seat? I understood that you were going to give him a glass of wine?"

"I thought, my dear —"

"You thought! You are always thinking instead of

doing. Come here, little boy, and sit down on this hassock at my feet; and see you don't spill any of your wine on the carpet."

The doctor, after rolling a few imaginary pills, sidled out of the room, and I was left alone with the terrible lady. I drank my wine drop by drop, glancing timidly upward every minute or two, but not daring to go and set down my glass when it was empty. We sat in silence for some time; only now and then, to my great dismay, I could not keep back a little tickling cough, which would burst out in spite of all my endeavours. Every time I coughed I felt Mrs. Graile's severe glance rest on me for a moment, and I determined not to offend again. The fire was a large one, and I was soon thoroughly warmed through, but durst not move from my seat. Gradually, Mrs. Graile herself seemed to feel the soothing influence of the fire; for, after a while, her work dropped languidly on her knees; her eyes closed, opened, closed again; her head dropped forward, started back with a jerk, fell forward again; and Mrs. Graile was asleep. There could be no mistake about it; her breathing was too deep and regular to permit of any doubt on the point; nevertheless, I sat for a full quarter of an hour longer before I ventured to stir, and then on tiptoe only, with my handkerchief stuffed into my mouth to stifle the rising cough. Once out of the room, and the door gently closed, I bounded up-stairs, and burst into the play-room with all the eagerness of a prisoner set free.

The room was in an uproar when I entered. The central figure was my brother Neville, who was standing with one foot pressed on a gaily-dressed mannikin, which was bleeding saw-dust from several severe wounds; his

hands clenched, his eyes flashing, defying the whole assembly. Near him stood the pretty little Olive, with pouting lips and tear-bedewed eyes; and my cousin Philip, looking on with grave displeasure in his young face. The rest of the company formed an outer circle that took care not to approach the bellicose Neville too closely.

"It is mine, I repeat!" said Neville, passionately, as I opened the door. "She gave it me, herself, not half an hour ago."

"I gave it you to keep; not to pull to pieces," pouted Olive.

"You gave it me to keep, so I could do what I liked with it. I hate girls!" he said, turning to the company generally. "They are fit for nothing, but eating bread and butter. They've nothing manly about them. They're always changing their minds."

"For shame, Neville!" said Philip. "Remember where you are. Give the Punch back to Olive at once, or I shall tell papa as soon as he comes."

"Tell-tale!" hissed Neville, turning like lightning on Philip. "You dare not come and take it! None of you dare! You are all cowards! You can do nothing but carry tales! I hate girls! I hate you all! I don't care for —"

"Neville!" said a grave voice behind him — my father's. Poor Neville dropped down at once from the height of his passion — wavered, and turned pale. "Yes, sir," he muttered with downcast eyes.

"I am surprised that any son of mine should behave in such a manner. Take your hat, sir, and begone this moment. You and I will settle this matter between us, afterwards."

Neville took his hat without a word, flashed up one black look at his father, walked slowly down-stairs, closed the door after him with a bang that echoed through the house, and was gone.

"I'm glad he's gone," said Olive; "aren't you, Philip? He is such a rude boy."

The excitement caused by this scene was quickly over, and the afternoon sped away in the midst of games and amusements of various kinds. Tea-time, much desired season, with its numerous good things, came and went; and we were just organising a game at blind-man's buff, in which both young and old were to join — always excepting Mrs. Graile, who looked with no favourable eyes on such amusements, but had been won over as a spectator by Olive's importunity — when a messenger, pale and breathless, rushed into the room, and beckoned my father on one side. To them were quickly joined my mother and Doctor Graile; and a whisper passed round the room that some terrible accident had happened to my brother Neville. My father and Doctor Graile were out of the house in a moment, and my mother quickly followed. The proposed game was given up, and we children crowded into a corner, whispering, and asking one another for particulars. Philip and Ruth were too impatient to stay any longer; so Helen and I got ready to accompany them home, and we departed together, after a frigid farewell from Mrs. Graile, who was still residing among the glaciers. It was quite dark by the time we reached home; but there were lights flashing up and down, from room to room, portending something unusual. We made our way at once into the kitchen, and crowding round old Betty, the housekeeper, besought her to tell us what had occurred.

"Hush, my honies!" said the old woman, with a shaking voice. "You mustn't make the least bit of noise, for Master Neville's lying up-stairs insensible, with his leg broken, and a great hole in his head."

"But how did it happen, Betty? That's what we want to know."

"I don't rightly know how it was," said the old woman. "But from what I've heard, Master Neville parted from his father in a bit of a passion, and went and climbed up some big tree or other to have a swing in the branches, as you know he often does when he's put out; and either climbing too high, or trusting to a rotten branch, he fell down, and cut his head open, and broke his leg, and was found without sense or feeling; and so you're all to go to bed, my dears, for he's very bad, and Doctor Graile says the house must be kept quiet."

We went up-stairs quietly and sadly without another word. Philip and I lay awake for a long time, talking the matter over in our boyish way; and when Doctor Graile quitted the room, we were lying in wait for him on the landing, and quite startled the little man by appearing suddenly before him in our night-dresses.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the doctor. "What are you young rascals doing out of bed at this time of the night? Neville? Why he's very poorly, indeed, at present; but I hope that with care we shall soon set him on his legs again. But you must keep quiet, very quiet, all of you, and be careful not to disturb him. Here's a ginger lozenge a-piece to warm your mouths with: and now be off to bed with you, or I shall have to warm you with my cane." And laughing softly, and nodding a pleasant good-night, the little doctor disappeared down-

stairs; the invisible hand clutching at his collar behind, as he went.

Many weary weeks elapsed before Neville could be pronounced convalescent, or even out of danger. I am afraid to think that at that time my father sometimes reproached himself with having been too severe with Neville; and deemed himself, in some measure, the cause of the accident: I judged so, at least, from his sad, drooping manner, and from certain words which he let fall on one or two occasions. If such were the case, how must his bitterness have been increased when, as Neville grew slowly better in body, his mind became gradually weaker; till at last my brother emerged from his sickness, as strong and handsome, in his boyish way, as before, but with a vacant eye, a wandering reason, and a powerless memory. Gradually he became the prey of a dull, brooding melancholy: looking on all who were nearest and dearest to him with distrustful but indifferent eyes, and falling into the most fearful fits of passion, if, by accident, any of his little whims were slighted. I think Doctor Graile was puzzled how to deal with such a case. He shook his head, and prescribed, and said we must trust to time, rather than to medicine, to work a cure. But when my father coming suddenly upon Neville one day, found him with his handkerchief knotted round his neck, and knew that had he come three minutes later, he would have found him dead, all the doctor could do was to recommend change of air — the sea-side, if possible — and constant supervision.

So Neville went at once to the sea-side, to a quiet little village on the east coast, in charge of my mother and Philip; my father being unable to leave home on account of his duties. The letters we received were

cheerless enough at first; and, indeed, it must have been a trying period both to my mother and Philip. But, gradually, a vein of silver hope ran through my mother's letters, which slowly broadened week by week, till at last came the golden assurance that Neville's health was almost restored, and that they would return home in about a month. It was an anxious time for my father. He used to look for the postman's visits more eagerly than a girl expecting to hear from her lover; and as the accounts he received became gradually more favourable, his old, cheerful, sunny manner came back to him in a way that was pleasant to see.

We all stood crowding round the gate on the day that was to restore Neville to us; and when the coach stopped, and my brother swung himself quickly down, and when my father met his bright affectionate smile, and the full, proud glance of his fearless eyes, he took the lad's hands in his, and kissed him on both cheeks, and bursting into happy tears, turned back into the house, and retired for a little space to his study.

CHAPTER III.

IN pursuance of his crotchet that girls ought to receive precisely the same education as boys, my father inducted Philip, Neville, and Ruth into the mysteries of the Latin grammar at the same time, and taught them together, and as if they were one person, till they were about fourteen years old; at which time, owing to her retentive memory, I doubt whether Ruth were not the best scholar of the three, but am certain that there was no one in the school, of the same age as herself, who could equal her in classical attainments. My father was

intensely proud of his achievement, and pointed it out as a triumphant example of what might be accomplished in the way of female education. It must have been about this period that he published his pamphlet advocating the enactment of a law to permit young ladies to graduate at the universities, take degrees, and use honorary initials after their names.

Having succeeded so well with his elder daughter, he determined that the younger should follow in the same path; but his success in this instance was as limited, as in the former it had been complete. Helen could not learn the Latin grammar. It was not for want of capacity, for she was quick enough in other things; nor for want of industry, for she studied it, and pored over it morning, noon, and night. Each day's task was correctly repeated; but the very fact of knowing that one so well, confused and nullified the previous day's lesson, and left it floating in her memory, a wild chaos of incomplete sentences and disconnected words. My father at length gave up the attempt in despair; and, with a groan of discontent, ordered that Helen should be sent to Miss Thimbleton's seminary; though he must say he was afraid she would prove to be an incorrigible dunce. Miss Thimbleton, however, made no complaint, but turned my sister out at the end of five years, tolerably well versed in all the learning and accomplishment which are usually taught in seminaries for young ladies. My father soon got over his disappointment, and loved Helen not a whit the less by reason of it. I have always been inclined to think she was my father's favourite child, as Neville was my mother's favourite — if, where all were loved so well, any could claim a degree more than another; indeed, the gradation in excess was so fine that I

am sure both my father and mother were unaware of it. It was only natural that Helen should be my father's favourite. She was a girl, and the youngest; besides being the fairest of the flock. He called her his wild rose, his summer child, the prop of his old age; and it was ever her dearest study to please him. Whenever my father was ill, or in trouble, Helen was the one to comfort him most effectually. The correspondence between their natures was so fine and subtle, that she could read him, and understand him, better than my mother. Her insight was clearer, her power of observation finer, his half-expressed thoughts found an echo in her heart; and she could walk with charmed feet on that ground where no one else might tread, sacred to the best and holiest feelings of his nature. She was a famous little housekeeper, too, and my mother's assistant in all domestic matters; and I have reason to believe that the great secret connected with the manufacture of preserves was communicated to her at the early age of sixteen — a fact unexampled in our domestic history.

It was precisely in this latter qualification of housekeeper that Ruth was most deficient. The robust education imparted to her by my father, in addition, perhaps, to her natural bias for study, disinclined her from meddling in household matters. My mother fretted and fumed considerably at finding her elder daughter of so little use to her; and was hardly consoled by perceiving in Helen all those domestic qualifications which she missed in Ruth. As the bent of her mind was so decidedly evinced, my father determined to send Ruth from home to finish her education, and acquire those accomplishments which he was unable to teach her, with a view to her becoming eventually either a governess, or

a teacher in some large school. So she left home by coach, one bitter January morning. This was the first break in our little household since Katie's death, many years before, and it made us all very sad for some time. My mother was full of presentiments and forebodings for several weeks; and beheld, in every trivial circumstance that disturbed her equanimity, an omen of evil to come. My father regretted that he could not teach Ruth music and singing, and thus keep her at home a while longer; and he said he felt, at times, half inclined to send for her back. But Ruth's letters, full of energy and hope, and liking for her new life without forgetting the old, soon dissipated these affectionate fears.

The year following Ruth's departure saw that of Philip. He had decided to become a doctor, and was to go to London for the purpose of studying. I fancy that his frequent visits to Doctor Graile's had some influence on his decision. The little man used to talk to him on medical subjects, and show him his specimens, imbuing him with the idea that the art of healing was one of the noblest in the world.

Neville still remained at home, and what profession he should adopt was becoming a serious question with my father. The lad at length settled it himself, by deciding that he would go to sea. My father at first interposed a peremptory refusal; and my mother assisted on the same side, by many tearful requests to Neville to choose another profession, as she had a presentiment that he would be drowned, and that his first voyage would also be his last. But Neville had a will of his own, impervious alike to threats and tears, when any great occasion was to be served; and to sea he averred that he would go, in spite of everybody. It was, perhaps, the

fittest place for him, and his choice was not an unwise one; but neither my father nor mother could bear the idea of such a separation. That strange malady to which he had been a victim in his childhood seemed to have left its traces in his disposition, which was marked by an occasional wildness, both of speech and action, breaking out at times in some strange freak that alarmed everyone about him. Even my father had very little command over him when he was in these wild moods. He cared but little for books or study, and would steal away, whenever he could, for a wild scamper across the country, with some young scapegrace like himself, rifling birds'-nests, robbing orchards, and snaring rabbits, as opportunity served. Often, in summer, he would remain out all night on the hills, and return in the morning pale, languid, and weary, as though he were overcome with fatigue. Still his heart was in the right place, as we country people say, and no one could be near him long without learning to love him.

A quiet war went on for some time between my father and him. Neither of them would yield; but Neville at length settled the question by running away, and entering himself as cabin boy on board a ship sailing from Liverpool for Antigua. We received a letter from him, dated the day the vessel was to sail, informing us of what he had done. I think my father now regretted that he had not yielded in time, and obtained for Neville a more creditable position to start from.

There were only Helen and I now left at home; she assisting my mother in domestic matters, and I, as I grew up, gradually assuming the position of assistant to my father in the school.

And so some years glided quietly away. Philip and Ruth came over every Christmas and midsummer, and Neville also, for a few weeks, at the conclusion of each voyage. The latter expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the career he had chosen; and said that in a few years he should be made captain, and that his ambition would then be satisfied.

The friendship between Doctor Graile's household and ours seemed only to ripen with time. It is true that Mrs. Graile was too cold and reserved to win anything warmer than distant regard from the most impulsive of individuals; but what was deficient in her was amply atoned for by the doctor. My father and he seemed necessary to each other's happiness. In winter they played at chess together; in summer they opposed each other on the bowling-green; and few evenings in the year were passed by them apart. And there was fair Olive, who was the golden link between the two houses, — a wayward little beauty, with long, flaxen ringlets, and the merriest laugh in the world. Very accomplished, too, she was generally considered to be; for she had passed some years at an eminent boarding-school. And then her taste in dress was so good! A flower, a ribbon, a bit of lace that no one else would care about, became, in her plastic fingers, a thing of beauty, and added another charm where none seemed wanting before. I believe everybody loved her and admired her, she was so fresh and fair — except, perhaps ancient Miss Grooby, who lived near the toll-bar, and who was heard to declare, on one occasion, that Miss Olive's beauty was all outside, and that she was nothing more than a little cold-hearted, empty-headed flirt.

"A spiteful old thing!" said Olive, when they told

her. "Everybody knows that she never had any beauty, either of heart or face."

CHAPTER IV.

It was a proud day for all of us when Philip obtained his diploma. My father left his breakfast half-finished, the morning he received the news and hurried off to Doctor Graile's to communicate the joyful intelligence, carrying the open letter in his hand. A friend of my father, an eminent London surgeon, offered to take Philip as an assistant, till an eligible opening could be found for him to commence practice on his own account; so my cousin came down to spend a few weeks with us, before going to his new home. It was some time since we had seen him last, and he seemed to have grown suddenly into a man. We were all proud of him, my mother especially so; and on Sunday when we went to church, she quitted my father's side, and walked down the aisle leaning on Philip's arm, her dear face beaming with love and pride; but when the minister prayed for those who travel by land and by water, there came a moisture into her eyes, and we knew that she was thinking of Neville.

It was during this visit of Philip that I first suspected that the intimacy between him and Olive Graile was becoming one of a tenderer nature than mere friendship would warrant. It was not anything which Philip said that led me to think so, for he was not a person to talk about such things, even to those most intimate with him; but being about this time possessed by a mania for spinning verses, and seeking my inspiration in solitude, I, several times during my evening rambles, met Philip

and Olive walking arm in arm through the meadows by the river side. Besides which, the rogue spent half his time at Doctor Graile's, under pretence of keeping up his knowledge, and obtaining information which would be useful to him in his profession. I dare say my father took it all for granted, and never suspected anything beyond what was implied by Philip's words; but whether or no my mother and Helen knew of his growing attachment, I cannot say. If they were aware of it, they never mentioned it; and as Philip did not speak of it, I kept my counsel, and was silent like the rest. Once or twice I was on the point of questioning Philip, for I had all a boy's curiosity on the subject; but then you see he was not a person to be questioned with impunity. He had a quiet, haughty way of putting down the slightest impertinence — a word and a look merely, but far more effective than the noisiest demonstrations of others. Then again, he was a man, while I was still a mere boy, imbued with such a boyish admiration of him, that I determined, when I should become a man, to imitate my cousin as much as possible; and, indeed, I made a beginning at once by training my hair, with much painful labour, to follow the fashion of his, and by tying my cravat in the same way that his was tied. Whenever I thought about Philip's love affairs, which, after his departure, was not often, for I was busy about that time writing an epic poem in twenty cantos, I remember it was with a vague feeling that Olive was not the sort of person calculated, as a wife, to make him happy. She was so light and volatile, so changeful and full of whims, so different from Philip in disposition and temper, that for all her beauty and pretty, saucy ways, it was a mystery to me how an attachment could ever have

sprung up between them. But, then, Philip was not the first man of sense that has been entangled by a pretty face with nothing behind it.

Philip came over frequently for a day or two at a time; and though half of each visit was spent at Doctor Graile's, there was nothing either in his words or looks which betrayed that anything more than professional tastes induced him to go there so frequently.

We had not seen Neville for nearly two years; but he came at last — a tall, sunburnt sailor, full of fire and energy — and there was much joy at home when he arrived. My father gave the scholars a half-holiday, in honour of the event; and my mother at once issued invitations to our friends for a party to celebrate my brother's return. It was to be merely a quiet country tea-party, with a dance afterwards for us young folk, and sixpenny whist for our elders. Philip wrote to say that he could not come, having a very critical case in hand, which required his undivided attention. Olive came, as a matter of course; and very pretty she looked. Neville started with surprise when she entered the room; she had grown so tall, and was so much improved since he had seen her last, that he scarcely knew her. He seemed rather bashful and timid at first, but she soon put him at his ease. He hardly ever took his flashing black eyes off her during the evening; and after all the company were gone, I saw him sitting in a corner smoothing out a little white kid glove between his great palms; neither do I think it difficult to guess to whom it had belonged. He was off next morning, immediately after breakfast, to Doctor Graile's, to inquire how the family were; and I believe he never afterwards during his visit passed a day

without going in the same direction. As, during the previous summer, I had met Philip and Olive walking together in the meadows, so it was now Neville and Olive whom I met arm in arm, taking the same walks. Was the little beauty merely flirting with Neville; or had she given up Philip for the sake of the handsome sailor; or was there on her part no attachment for either of them? I knew not what to think: and as it was certainly no business of mine, I considered it best to keep silent on the matter. Neville was evidently over head and ears in love; his warm impulsive nature could not conceal the fact; he betrayed it daily in his words and actions. As a proof of his infatuation, I may mention that he professed to like Mrs. Graile extremely; and he did, indeed, contrive to thaw that icy lady, and to win his way into her chill favour in an unexampled manner.

One morning, some weeks before he expected it, came a peremptory summons to join his ship without delay. It would not do to disobey orders; so he prepared, ruefully enough, for immediate departure. On one point I am certain — that Olive and he had a long interview the evening before he left us; and when he joined me in the garden after parting from her, there was such a happy loving look on his face, as I had never seen there before. He asked me, after we got up-stairs, to assist him in cording his large trunk; and as he stooped to fasten the knob, a piece of paper fell from his pocket, which opening when it reached the ground, displayed a lock of hair vastly like Olive's in colour, tied with blue ribbon in a true-lover's-knot. He coloured to the forehead, stammered out some words about a West Indian damsel (as if the ladies of that part of the world had flaxen locks), and replaced it carefully in his pocket.

Neville was never fond of letter-writing; and if, during his voyages, we received a few lines from him once in six months, we thought ourselves fortunate. After his departure this time, whenever he wrote he sent "affectionate regards to Doctor and Mrs. Graile," but never said a word about Olive; an omission on his part which gave me the idea that he corresponded with her, direct.

Some two or three years elapsed after Neville's departure without the occurrence of any event in our quiet family circle necessary to linger over here. Philip came at intervals to see us, and Ruth always spent her vacations at home. My sister Helen was engaged to be married to Peter Sykes, the shoemaker's son, whom I mentioned before as having been smuggled by my father into the school, and who had just taken his degree, with high honours, at the university. I also was enacting my own little romance about this time — I and pretty Rose Allan, whom I hoped to marry after a while, but never did. As for Ruth, so plain of person, so neat of dress, so prim, so quiet, so methodical, she was always set down, laughingly, in our family conclaves, as an old maid. She accepted the lot we assigned to her with undisturbed serenity. Sometimes she would reply, with a quiet smile, that women were foolish to encumber themselves with husbands, when they might live happy and independent without them.

We were seated round the fire one chill October evening, Helen, my father, and myself, when we heard a knock at the front door. Helen sprung to open it, thinking it was my mother returned from shopping. We heard a sudden exclamation in the passage, and then Helen rushed back into the room. "Father, here's Neville!"

she cried, clapping her hands for joy, and turning round to embrace her brother again. He followed her closely into the room, and then stood staring blankly around, and shading his eyes with one hand, as though the light were too strong for him; but with never a smile of greeting on his face. Could this pale, hollow-cheeked figure, dusty and unshaven, with close-cropped hair, be our Neville, our gay, young sailor? Alas! there could be no doubt about it. "Neville, my boy, welcome home," said my father, starting up and grasping his hand. "But you look pale! You are ill! Is it not so? Helen, some refreshment, immediately!" No, he was not ill, he replied, but in such a dry, husky voice, as made me shiver to hear. My father gazed earnestly into his eyes, put away a tear that dimmed his own, and, pulling him forward, pressed him down, with gentle violence, into the arm-chair in the corner.

"Why did you not write, my boy? You look pale, and thin, and far from well. Now, tell me truly, are you really well?"

"Quite well, father, thank you. But where's my mother? I want to see my mother!"

"Here I am, Neville! Here I am, dear!" exclaimed my mother, who had entered at the moment without being perceived.

He sprang to her heart in a moment, as he had done when a child; and mother and son stood locked in a loving embrace. Then my mother, taking him gently by the shoulders, and holding him at arm's length, scanned his pale face with anxious eyes. "O my darling! what is it?" she asked, in such tender tones as an angel might have used. Her motherly eye saw that his ailing was not mere bodily illness. She sat down without leaving

hold of his hand, and he sank down at her knees, and laid his weary head in her lap. Softly stroking his hair with one hand, and bending over him, she spoke again: "Tell me, what it is that ails you?" A sob broke from his heart. "O mother!" he cried, with a low, despairing wail, "O mother, they flogged me!"

My father directed a look towards Helen and me. We rose and left the room. My father followed us the next minute, closing the door gently behind him, and left mother and son to the sacred solitude of their grief.

I retired to my own room up-stairs, and sat there, sadly enough, for some time. About ten o'clock there came a tap to my door, and Neville entered. "I want to talk to you a bit, Caleb," he said; "but put that light out, please; it dazzles my eyes; and we can talk as well without it." So I blew out the candle, and drew up the blind, and let the mild starlight stream into the room. I noticed, before putting out the light, that he did not look so despairing as on his arrival, and that his eyes shone with a calmer lustre.

"Caleb," he began, "you know why I have returned home, a disgraced and ruined man; but you don't know what led me up to the point which made such a thing possible; that is what I want now to tell you. I sailed the last time under a fresh captain. He was a brute, and treated his crew as if they were the same. I was first mate; and, as a matter of course, we did not long agree. You know that my temper is a somewhat passionate one; that it always has been so; and that I never would calmly accept the slightest injustice or insult. Well; our voyage out was nothing but a series of quarrels and hollow truces. When we had got about half-

way on the voyage home, we had a more violent quarrel than ever. He gave me the lie, and I knocked him down. When he rose he ordered the crew to put me in irons. I lay all night handcuffed and in chains; early the following morning they forced me on deck, stripped me to the waist, lashed me to the mast, and flogged me — flogged me, Caleb, till the blood fell from my back in clotted masses on the deck — flogged me till I fell down insensible, and had to be carried like a log of wood to my hammock. I had but few intervals of consciousness after that for several weeks — intervals full of horrible agony; for I lapsed into a violent fever, and was raging mad for I know not how long. It is enough to state that when I came back to consciousness and comparative ease, I found myself in the hospital at Liverpool, where I lay as weak and lifeless as a child for several weeks longer. And now, you see me here.”

“Dear Neville? what you must have suffered!”

“I lingered all day, Caleb, in the fields round about. For the first time in my life, I was ashamed to venture here. I durst not come till dark. O, brother! those burning stripes have eaten into my soul! To think that I stand here unavenged, with those marks on my back! But the day will come! Caleb, it is dark, and you cannot see my face. Lend me your hand — here — so — under my waistcoat. Do you feel them?”

He guided my fingers with his hand, and I felt the great wales on his back, scored across from side to side, thick as the lines on a music sheet. I recoiled, sick at heart, and almost fainting.

“Good night, Caleb,” he said, with tremulous voice. “Would that the last Good Night were said, for I am weary of my life!”

"Good night, dear Neville," I replied, squeezing his hand. My heart was full, and I could not say another word.

When he came down next morning, the daylight revealed to us still more plain the great change that had taken place in his appearance. Worn and ghastly, haggard and despairing, his looks told us, clearer than any words, through what depths of suffering he must have struggled. He sat silently among us, heedless of all around, with the dreamy vacancy in his eyes, of a man whose thoughts are far away. My mother's eyes were red with weeping; but in his presence she showed the love and hid the sorrow, knowing that to display the latter would only distress him still more. All that day, and for several days afterwards, he went wandering up and down the house and garden, never going outside the gate; moody, unobservant, and rarely speaking to any one; never sitting down from daylight to dark for more than a minute or two at a time. My heart misgave me; and in these signs I thought I discerned the sad forerunners of his old malady. I watched him closely, without seeming to do so.

We all tried to engage him in cheerful conversation, and to win him back to some of the interests of everyday life. He repulsed our proffered sympathy, gently but firmly; replied in monosyllables, and retreated into solitude as quickly as possible. It was a continual heart-ache to us to see one whom we loved so well thus build up of his own free will a barrier between us. He would stay out till late at night, pacing to and fro on the garden terrace, musing, and muttering sadly to himself. My bedroom window looked on this terrace. On going to bed one night I found the window open, and approach-

ing to shut it, heard Neville walking backwards and forwards beneath it. I looked out, and could just distinguish his tall gaunt figure. He was muttering to himself, and tossing his arms wildly as he walked.

"Disgraced! disgraced!" he exclaimed despairingly as he approached. "Can I see her thus? Can I ask her to love me, to comfort me, to be my wife? Ah, me! I see no light, no way out of this dreary valley. But I will go to-morrow! This torture is killing me! I will see her, and know the truth — I will tell her —"

Here his voice died to a whisper in the distance. I closed my window gently, and prayed heaven to comfort this unhappy soul. The words I had overheard struck cold to my heart. Scant comfort would he find where he looked for it most: that I knew. What was the fascination that drew two strong men to the side of this girl? And how would such rivalry end? Vain questions which Time, the great solver of riddles, alone could answer.

He dressed himself more carefully than usual the following morning; and, at an early hour in the forenoon, left home for Doctor Graile's. He did not return till after dark, and going directly up-stairs, without seeing any one, locked himself in his own room. We all retired at the usual time. I sat down in my bedroom, waiting for I knew not what. The clock struck twelve. The sound had scarcely died away before I heard Neville's door opened, and then stealthy foot-steps descending the stairs. I followed after as close as I durst go. Opening the back door, Neville stepped out into the garden. I did the same, and then cowered down behind some bushes, waiting to see what he would do next. Instead

of going out of the garden, as I had half expected, he began to walk up and down on the terrace. I could not leave my concealment without certain discovery. Again his wild words fell upon my ears.

"Engaged to another!" he muttered. "Well, well, it's only the way of the world — to deceive, and to be deceived. Fool that I was to believe anything she told me! Never cared for me, she says. Her promises, open and implied, were lies all. O, heaven! to think of that fair face, and all so black within! She tore my heart out of me, and now she flings it back smilingly in my face. But let her beware! let them both beware! The fiend and I are good friends now," and he laughed loudly, a wild hollow laugh. "We have joined hands on't, and nobody knows our secret. And now to bed, for we shall want all our wits to-morrow. O, sweetheart! the reckoning shall be a bitter one."

He took one more turn along the terrace, and then went in, bolting the door behind him. Thus shut out, I slunk round to the scullery window, and finding it unfastened, crept through, and so up-stairs to bed. Neville was sleeping heavily already.

Never since his return home had Neville been so gay, so talkative, so full of spirits as he was on the following morning. But with his words of last night ringing in my ears, I liked his present mirth less than his previous depression. My mother was charmed to see him so much better; and my father forgot the time, and stayed talking till half-past nine — a thing he had never been guilty of before, and which astonished the scholars as much as it did himself. I mentioned my suspicions to my father as we walked towards the school. He could not see any

foundation for them until I told him what I had overheard on the previous night. He looked grave at this.

"I think," said he, "it is hardly necessary to take the opinion of Doctor Graile in the matter, as Philip is sure to be here either to-night or in the morning; and as he has devoted much of his time to the study of mental derangements, it will be as well to take his advice first. But, Caleb, stay you at home to-day, and keep a watchful eye on my poor boy. I hope truly that it will not be necessary to employ coercive measures. Good-bye! The boys will think I am either dead or ill."

So I returned home; and all forenoon and all afternoon, I kept by Neville's side. He was boisterously gay the whole time. He did not seem to have any suspicion why I kept so near him; but once or twice he fixed a glittering eye on me, and asked me sharply why I was not at the school. The chill afternoon was waning, and twilight was drawing on apace, when, as we were sitting together in the parlour, Neville rose up suddenly.

"Caleb," he said, in a gentle voice, fumbling about his waistcoat, "I have left my watch up-stairs on the dressing-table. Will you be kind enough to fetch it me?"

I went, in a moment, without thinking. I found the watch as he had stated, and returned with it in my hand; but Neville was no longer in the parlour. I sought him through the house and through the garden, calling his name; but he was not to be found. The thought then flashed across me that he had sent me for his watch that he might rid himself of my company, and get away unobserved. Seizing my hat, I sallied forth; but I had not got a hundred yards before I discovered how futile any attempt at pursuit would be. Darkness was closing in fast; Neville had been gone a quarter of an hour, and

he might have gone in any one of a dozen different directions. And what if I found him? It was evident that he did not want my company just then, and to anger him in such a mood would be unwise. Philip would be here in the morning, and then something decisive might be done. Reasoning thus, I returned home.

The evening crept on. We were all assembled, as usual, in the sitting-room. Now and then my father looked at his watch. At last he said:

"Philip will hardly come to-night. It is past coach-time, now."

I did not mention to him how Neville had left me, not seeing that it would do any good to disturb his equanimity. My mother sat knitting, and humming an old ballad-tune to herself. Helen was writing to her betrothed. At once there came the sound of hurrying feet along the passage; the door was thrown open, and Olive Graile burst into the room, pale, horror-struck, with wide-staring eyes.

"O Mr. Redfern!" she shrieked, wringing her hands wildly. "Philip! He lies dead! murdered in the meadows!"

She gasped for breath, stared wildly round and fell insensible to the floor.

Leaving Helen and my mother to attend to her, my father and I rushed out of the house at once and ran, as for our lives, towards the fields by the river-side. There was a young moon shining dimly over head, and in the vague light, houses and trees, fields and river, all looked ghastly as we sped along; but far more ghastly than all, the dead Philip, when we found him, lying directly in our path, close to a thick clump of willows. I, being

somewhat in advance, was the first to discover him; and when my father saw me stoop down by the dark object, his limbs trembled like a child's, and the foundations of life were shaken within him. The body was rigid already; and we saw at a glance, but would not acknowledge, that it was beyond all earthly aid.

There was no wound perceptible as he lay there on the grass. The fatal bullet had pierced through the coat and vest to his heart. He lay with one arm across his chest, and the other outstretched with clenched fingers. A dark frown had settled on his pale features, as though, even in death, he defied his murderer.

Looking round to see if there were any traces of the murderer, my father saw something glittering in the moonlight. He took it up. It was a pistol. He approached me without a word, and held the weapon close to my face. I knew it — we both knew it — Neville's pistol. There was his name engraven on a small silver plate let into the stock, and I had seen it in his hands the previous morning. I shall never forget the terrible expression of anguish that passed like a ripple over my father's face when he saw that I recognised it.

"Caleb," he said, looking me steadily in the face, and speaking in a low voice that thrilled through me; "no one must know of this. It must be a secret between you and me. It is enough that I have this night lost one dear to me as my own son. Repentance — not sacrifice — is now needed."

So speaking, he placed the pistol in the breast-pocket of his coat, and carefully buttoned it up. We then took up our dear dead, tenderly and reverentially, having first laid a handkerchief over the still features, and so carried him home between us. The first person we met

we sent off to Doctor Graile's, requesting his immediate presence. We saw my mother standing at the door, as we advanced up the garden.

She had not the courage to come any further, and yet could not remain in the house. She read the dread news in our faces, and waited for no more.

"Dead! dead!" she cried aloud. "O my poor heart; what shall I do! — what shall I do!"

We carried the body up-stairs, and laid it on the best bed. It would have added to my mother's misery if we had laid it on any other. Doctor Graile arrived at this moment, and with him came two policemen; for the news had spread by this time from end to end of the little town.

The bullet has gone direct to his heart," said the doctor, after a brief examination. "Death must have been instantaneous."

"If you please, sir," said one of the officers, "we should like to have a few words with the young lady who, we understand, was with him when the affair took place. She might be able to throw some light on it, and give us a clue to the murderer."

So we went down stairs, all except my father.

"I dare not go, Caleb," he whispered; "come and tell me the result when it is over."

We found Olive lying on the sofa, moaning, and shivering like one stricken with fever.

"My dear," said the doctor addressing her, "we want you to give us, as concisely and clearly as possible, a full account of all that passed between the late Mr. Philip Delmer and yourself, from the time you met him this evening till the moment he was so barbarously murdered."

"O papa!" she exclaimed, sobbing out afresh. "I cannot bear to speak of it. I can only think about it at present. Do please spare me!"

"It is necessary for several important reasons," said the doctor very gravely, "that you should do as I ask you. So summon all your firmness to your aid for a few minutes, and relate to us, as closely as you can remember, everything that passed between you."

Thus adjured, Olive was obliged to comply, and with many sobs and tears she began as follows:

"Philip wrote me a short note yesterday, asking me to meet him this evening on the other side of the bridge, as he wished to see me before going home, having something of importance to relate to me. I met him as he had requested, and it was nearly dark. We went walking gently up and down the meadows for about two hours, talking cheerfully to each other. I never saw him in better spirits."

"What was the matter of importance he had to relate to you?"

"He told me that he should be obliged to return to London the following evening, and that he had written to me to meet him before he went home, because it was his intention to ask the consent of Mr. Redfern and yourself — to-morrow morning — to our marriage; and he wanted to tell me beforehand."

"What was he saying and doing at the moment you heard the pistol fired? Had you hold of his arm at the time?"

"O papa, spare me!" she exclaimed, hiding her head in the pillows of the sofa.

"My child, there are none but friends here, and it is

of the greatest importance that you should be explicit. Speak the truth without shame or fear."

"I had hold of his arm," she went on. "He had just said, 'Olive, this day six months we shall be man and wife,' and stooped down to kiss me as he said it. As he was raising his head again, there came a sudden flash and explosion. He flung up his arms exclaiming, 'O my God!' and then fell to the earth. He only spoke once more, saying, 'Olive, tell my aunt —' but could not finish. Then a great shiver ran through his body, and I knew that he was dead."

"Did you see any one near or at a distance, while you were in the meadows, either before or after the shot was fired?"

"I did not see any one."

"There are a clump of willows close to where the murder took place. Could any one be concealed there, and you not see him, when you went past it?"

"Certainly; especially after nightfall."

"Did you see any one step out of the willows at the moment the shot was fired?"

"I seemed to see a great black shadow start up with outstretched arm; but the flash blinded my eyes, so that I could be certain of nothing."

"Are you acquainted with any one who, in your judgment, had any cause or reason to commit such a deed?"

To this question, after some hesitation, she answered, "I am not."

My father only sighed when I told him; then beckoning me to follow him, he led the way into his study, and going up to his bureau — an old and massive piece of furniture — touched a secret spring, which opening

a pigeon-hole, revealed to me the place where he had concealed the pistol.

"Only you and I, Caleb, know of this. It may be wanted some day after I am gone. If so, you know where to find it."

CHAPTER V.

AFTER the first great burst of grief was over, consequent on the bringing home of the body; and when Doctor Graile and Olive had departed; my father desired the rest of the household to retire to their rooms, and obtain what sleep they could.

"Caleb," he said, when we were left alone, "do you think it likely that Neville will come home to-night?"

"There is no accounting, sir, for what he may do while the present mood is on him."

"Then we must sit up for him. Take the candles into the front sitting-room, and leave the shutters unfastened, so that he may see we have not retired, in case he should come near the house. I will join you presently."

So my father and I sat up through the long October night, waiting for Neville, who never came. About two o'clock my father left me, and going up-stairs in the dark, passed into the chamber of the dead. Presently a door opened, and my mother joined him. And so those two passed their vigil in tears and prayer till break of day. Then my father came down to me.

"Neville will not come now," he said. "Your mother is asking for him. Go and account to her for his absence."

So I went to my mother, and told her a plausible

lie to account for Neville's absence, shrinking before her clear eyes while I did so. But she did not doubt me, and was satisfied. Oh, who could have been so cruel as to break her heart with the stern truth?

I have no call to linger over the events of the next few days. Even at this distance of time, I cannot recall them without pain. The coroner's inquest, with its verdict of Wilful Murder against some person or persons unknown; the police investigations ending in nothing; and even the last sad scene in the churchyard, when we bade farewell to our loved one; all these passed weakly over us, wounded too deeply at first, as we were, to feel very much any after-blow. Then came the painful wrenching back of our thoughts and attention from the solemn business of death to the ordinary duties of everyday life.

Doctor Graile thinking that his daughter's health was suffering from the shock of Philip's sudden death, and that change of scene might prove beneficial to her; sent her to stay with a relative near London. She had scarcely been there a month, when a wealthy tallow-merchant fell in love with her, and made her an offer of marriage. Mrs. Graile thought this too advantageous an opportunity to be refused, and as Olive knew no will beyond that of her mother, the tallow-merchant was accepted; and six months after Philip's death, Olive and he were married. The little doctor came himself to tell us of it. He was almost in tears about it, and seemed truly miserable; but we knew that he had had no hand in the matter. My mother took it rather to heart, and fretted about it a good deal.

"If there is one person more than another," she said,

"who should have cherished the memory of my noble boy, it is Olive Graile. But she is not worthy of him!"

On their return from their wedding-tour, the newly-married couple took Dingwell by storm in a carriage-and-four. I happened to be passing through the town when they dashed into it. Olive's quick eyes caught me in a moment. Of course, the carriage must be stopped; and, of course, we must shake hands; and how was I in health? and how were papa and mamma, and all the family? And was it not charming weather? And then —

"Good bye! We shall be happy to see you, Mr. Caleb, if you will honour us with a call whenever you come to town."

And so away, kissing her hand; she all silk, blonde, feathers, and rosy smiles; the fat man by her side, all frowns and surly jealousy at such unwarrantable familiarity on the part of his property.

Month after month sped away, and still no news of Neville. This long silence began to prey upon my mother's health. She had lost one son, for in such light she regarded Philip; and now another seemed to have deserted her — deserted her? perhaps, he, also, was dead, — drowned, — never to be seen more of loving eyes. And the moisture came into her own eyes, and dimmed her spectacles when she thought of such a fate; and then she had to stop knitting while I wiped the glasses for her; and waiting for them, she would fall a-thinking again, and forget her work, and have to retire to bed, at last, overcome by the pictures she had conjured up. She was becoming weak and nervous, and fast losing the cheerfulness which she had only lately recovered since Philip's death. So my father determined to reveal the secret to her and my sister.

"I was wrong to conceal it at the time," he said. "Better that they should suffer under a knowledge of the truth, than perish slowly from the effects of a lie. The task of telling them now is twice as hard as it would have been at first."

So he told them the dread secret one quiet Sabbath evening in spring, as we all sat together in the twilight; not able to see each other's faces clearly, but yet having light sufficient to show us that we were all there together.

"I hold it as Heaven's truth," said my father, solemnly, as he concluded, "that my poor boy was not master of his actions when he committed that terrible deed; that, for some mysterious purpose, his reason had been taken from him. Who, then, shall stand forward and blame him — stricken by an invisible hand? Let us rather pray for him, in silence."

There had been a great change in my father ever since the sad night on which Philip was brought home. That sunny cheerfulness of manner, that quiet sarcastic humour, which were habitual to him before, now showed themselves in rare flashes only, at distant intervals. His grey hair was turning white, his lithe erect figure was becoming bowed at the shoulders; and his favourite game at bowls had to be given up, because it fatigued him too much. He took more snuff than ever, and would sit for hours at a time with his box in his hand, buried in reverie, and speaking to no one. Yet the change in him, at first, was so gradual and imperceptible that we, living beneath the same roof, and in daily communion with him, did not perceive it for some time. Doctor Graile was the first to point it out. My father yielded to his importunity, and took all the draughts and pills

that he sent, with a smile and a shake of the head, which implied that he had but little faith in their efficacy. Week by week, and month by month, he grew feebler, and more in need of our care. He would persist in attending the school so long as he could walk as far; but there came a morning when he was too weak to leave his arm-chair. Even then he insisted on having the first form sent to him, and heard them repeat their lessons while he sat propped up with pillows.

He still retained his affection for the classics; and when his eyes became so weak that he could no longer see to read above a few minutes at a time, I used to read aloud to him the full-flowing sonorous lines of some of the Latin poets. Ovid's *Tristia* was a book which he grew particularly fond of at this time. There is the echo of a great sorrow in its lines, and it tells of the dangers and troubles of those whose way is on the deep waters. At length, even the pleasure of sitting in his arm-chair was denied to him: he was confined to his bed. Now it was that the sterling womanly qualities of my sister Helen were seen to most advantage. With a father who required constant attention, and a mother who was far from well, she assumed at once her natural position of nurse and housekeeper, as though she had never been anything else; with untired patience and unwearied vigilance attending to the wants of everyone. With what tender affection, with what quiet sympathy, she waited on my father during his long and tedious illness, it is beyond my skill to portray. Many a time as she went softly about her duties in his room, I saw his lips move, and heard the whispered blessing.

Still he grew weaker and weaker, till it became evident that the end was not distant. Cheerful and un-

complaining in everything else, he now began to long for Neville more than ever. "Where's Neville?" he would sometimes ask when he woke up from sleep, with momentary forgetfulness of what had occurred. "Why does he not come to see me?" Then, like a flash of light, the past would overwhelm him, and he would sink back with a groan of anguish, exclaiming, "Go, seek my boy, some of you! I want to see him again before I die."

I had made inquiries, at the commencement of his illness, in every direction where I thought there was any likelihood of hearing tidings of my brother; and these inquiries I repeated from time to time, but to no purpose.

Doctor Graile's visits became more frequent, and his looks graver. As the spring advanced, my father's illness grew upon him; and by the time midsummer had come, it was evident that he had but a short time to live. When the school broke up for the vacation, he would have the lads into his bedroom, and address a few words to them, and shake hands with them individually. Tasks and punishments were forgotten for that day; they only remembered how kind, how like a father, the old master had been to them. Before the opening day came round, he was gone from among us; and when I told them, on the morning of our meeting, how he had said, only half-an-hour before he died, "Remember me to my dear pupils, and tell them I hope to see them all again," it did me good to see the soft April tears dropping quietly from their young eyes.

Meanwhile my father's daily cry was for Neville — "Oh, that he would come!" One evening, at the conclusion of his usual visit, Doctor Graile took me on

one side. "My dear young friend," he said, "it is my duty to inform you that I do not think your father can last many hours longer. His pulse is sinking rapidly —"

"Oh, sir, we thought him better to-day. He has been more cheerful than for some time past. It is only during the last hour that he has fallen off so."

"Mere febrile excitement and consequent exhaustion. It rests with you to determine whether you will communicate what I have told you to your mother and sisters; but, my dear Caleb, I have no expectation of finding my old friend alive at my next visit. He is beyond my skill now. Ah me! what shall I do without him? We have been like brothers for thirty years; and no one can ever be to me what he has been. Good night. Remember those who will soon have you alone to look to for protection, and bear up under your affliction."

It was a summer evening, balmy and warm. My father would have the window open; and the scent of new-mown hay, mingled with that of flowers, came floating into the room. The setting sun shot his golden shafts through the open casement, and the dying man basked in their glory. Slowly the darkness grew upon us, creeping up with soft gradations, till everything was shrouded in its sable folds. The rushlights were lighted, and we prepared for our usual watch. This night I and Ruth (who had now been at home for some weeks) were to watch. In spite of what Doctor Graile had told me, I still hoped that the end was not so near. My unpractised eye could not detect that my father was worse than usual; and so, building on this slight foundation, I kept the fatal intelligence to myself. My mother and Helen retired to rest as usual; and Ruth and I took our

seats, one on each side the bed. The hush of night fell over everything; only, from a distant wood, we heard at intervals, the faint notes of a nightingale. At length this too ceased; and then the short breathing and troubled exclamations of our dying father were the only sounds that broke the silence. He slept by brief snatches, and when he was awake, he sometimes wandered a little in his mind. His thoughts were continually with Neville: "Oh, that he would come, ere it be too late!"

The dark hours passed, one by one, each struck out by the clock below, with startling loudness. Twice during the night my mother glided in, nightcapped, and enveloped in a large shawl. At length the signs of morning became apparent. The gray dawn smote the windows, and put to shame the waning rushlight. Little birds came fluttering out of their warm nests; far across the meadow stretched the tiny river like a belt of cloud; and the purpling sky became beautiful to look upon. Suddenly my father sat up in bed. "Draw up the blinds and open the windows," he said. "So. The morning air tastes sweet. Hush! I hear him coming! I know his footstep. It is Neville's! At last he is here!"

I looked out. There was no one to be seen but a solitary haymaker toiling along the white road. Again the sick man dozed. Helen came in to resume her post as watcher; and, after one lingering look I left the room, accompanied by Ruth. Suddenly there came a ring at the front door. With a beating heart I hastened down to open it. There stood Neville. By what fine intuitive sense my father had foreknown his coming, it is impossible for me to say. Or was it merely a coincidence? A fervent grasp of the hand was our only greeting. I

led the way up stairs. My father was awake, and lying with his face towards the door.

"Bring him in, Caleb," he said, as I paused on the threshold. "I knew that my boy would come," he added, while a happy smile spread over his thin face. "I was searching for him long, last night; but I found him at last, and I knew that he would come!"

"O father!" was all that Neville could cry, as he sank down by the bedside, and buried his face in the clothes.

My father stretched forth a pallid hand, and laid it gently on his head. "Kiss me, Neville, as you used to do when a child. Ah me! how the old times rush back over my memory, when you were all children together, and no black shadow had blighted our hearth!"

Neville groaned.

"Hush, poor boy," said my father, gently. "Month after month I have longed and prayed for this hour to come. It has come, and with it, the time to clear up our doubts. Neville, answer me truly; did your cousin Philip fall by your hand?"

"Oh, believe me, I knew not what I did!" cried Neville. "Guilty I must be, since you say that he was murdered, but not knowingly guilty. I was dragged to it, forced to it, by a power within me which I could not control. But let me confess everything. Bear with me a short time, while I relate to you my dark story of passion and crime. You all know that I loved Olive Graile — from a child I loved her; at first as children love, unknowing and uncaring why; and afterwards, as boys love, with more of worship than of earthly passion. It was partly her wilful and capricious disposition, and partly her beauty that captivated me. I had reason to

believe that my affection was not unrequited. Thus the matter went on, till, on coming back from a two years' voyage, I met her for the first time after my return at a party at our house. She had shot up into a charming woman during my absence. A few minutes were sufficient to let her see that I still loved her as warmly as ever. For the first few days after our meeting, her manner was gentle, retiring, and full of maidenly coyness. She was luring me on. That fortnight was the happiest of my life. I ventured one afternoon to tell her all that I hoped and feared. She smote me with a haughty stare, and a curl on her lip; wondered what could have induced me to talk in that absurd fashion; hoped that she should never hear again of anything so ridiculous; and left me speechless, confused, and burning with anger and shame. When I next saw her, she treated me exactly as she had treated me before the afternoon on which I told her that I loved her.

"Her treatment of me was a puzzle which I could not solve; but I had too much faith in the sincerity of my own attachment to think for a moment that she was coquetting with me. Suddenly I was summoned to re-join my ship. I sought her for a last interview. She seemed sorry that I was going, and said she hoped I would not forget her when far away; adding that she should often think of me, and long for my return. The old passionate words sprang to my lips; but bearing in mind my previous lesson, I restrained them, and crushed them back into my heart. At parting, she gave me a little packet, desiring that I would not open it till she was gone. It contained that lock of hair which you, Caleb, accidentally saw. What was I to think? How was I to regard this token after what had occurred be-

tween us? I did as I suppose most lovers do — I looked on the rosy side of the question, and went away with a buoyant, loving heart, holding her sweetly in my thoughts as my future wife. At that time she was positively engaged to Philip: that I learnt afterwards, when it was too late. All that voyage her image was with me continually, keeping me company in the lonely night-watches; in sunshine, and in storm, ever by my side — all that voyage, till the fatal quarrel with my captain took place; after which, I lay for many weeks unconscious of everything. After my arrival at home, disgraced as I thought for ever, I struggled long and fiercely against my passion, striving to wrench it out of my heart, and did not go near Olive for several days. But I had not strength enough to give her up of my own accord. I had read and heard of young girls, who had kept to their promises through disgrace and sorrow, only clinging the firmer to the object of their affections when the world frowned around them. Perhaps, Olive might be one of those heroic spirits. You see how selfishly, how weakly I acted throughout. Worn out at length in body and mind, torn by two opposite passions — burning desire to avenge myself on the man who had wronged me so foully, and fear that my love would be rejected — I felt the gradual approach of that demon of madness whose prey I had been before; and who required at times, even when I was in the full flush of health, the utmost strength of my will, and power of my reason, to keep him at bay. I felt his approach, and I trembled. I knew that there was only one thing which could save me — the sweet assurance that I was still loved. My mind made up how to act, I went at once and sought an interview with Olive. I told her my love, but not

my disgrace. I meant to tell her that afterwards, but she never gave me an opportunity. She cut short my confession before I had uttered above a dozen words, by telling me that she was engaged to another, and shortly to be married; that anything which had passed between us heretofore merely arose out of friendship on her part; that she was astonished to find how it had been construed by me; and had given me credit for more sense than she now found I possessed. All this she said in cold, measured sentences, with a heartless smile of triumph on her face that maddened me even more than her words. I would not trust myself to reply, for I was no longer my own master; but quitted her at once. What happened for a long time after this, remains in my memory only like the fragments of a troubled dream, recalled with effort the next day. The madness that had long lurked in my brain burst forth in a moment, armed and full grown, and I lay powerless in its grasp. I must avenge myself somehow — that was my uppermost thought. By some strange mental process which I am unable to explain, the captain who had disgraced me, and the rival who had supplanted me, had become merged into one individual in my thoughts, and him I must slay. It was necessary that I should kill him. My recollections are so broken and confused that I cannot recall even these fragments without painful effort.

“With a madman’s keenness, I knew that Caleb suspected me, and had set himself to watch me. I smiled at the idea, and got rid of him by a simple device. Next I am under the willows, waiting for the lovers; though I cannot now tell what made me think they would pass that way. It is dark, or only vague moon-

light. I see them approaching — a dark, tall figure, my double enemy; a frail shrinking figure, my lost darling. I hear their whispered words of love. He stoops down to kiss her. A wave of fire rushes over my brain at the sight, and from this moment my recollection ceases. A terrible blank, that lasted for several weeks, ensued; and I knew nothing more till I one day found myself lying in a strange bed, with two pitying eyes bent over me that I had never seen before. I have done. Oh Father! have you no words of comfort for me? Tell me, am I forgiven?"

"Bear witness, all of you!" said my father, appealing to us. "You hear how he was afflicted. Philip's voice, at this hour, speaks through me, and pronounces him innocent. O wife! O children! take him to your hearts once more, guiltless of the crime of blood as on the day he was born!"

Here my pen must stop. A father's last words are sacred, and not to be lightly told. At ten o'clock that morning he died; his arm laid lovingly round the wanderer's neck.

CHAPTER VI.

It was the evening of the day on which my father was buried. Neville took my arm, and we walked out together in the direction of the churchyard. The mound was already formed, and covered with square patches of turf roughly joined. The grey quiet of the summer eve was broken only by the soft rustle of the poplar leaves on the tall trees that grew around, and by the grave cawing of a cloud of distant rooks, returning from some predatory excursion.

"The dead sleep well," said Neville, as we stepped into the churchyard. "They neither see nor hear what passes above their dark homes. Tears of sorrow, words of remorse, affect them not. They are beyond our touch — beyond our call — gone from us for ever. I also must depart. I cannot remain here, in a spot where I have been the cause of so much misery to others, and which teems with such recollections for myself."

"Surely, Neville, you will not leave us, now we are so few on the ground!"

"To remain here, Caleb, would kill me, not bodily, but mentally. In work, and constant action, and ceaseless endeavour, lie my only resources against my enemy. In another land, amid the growing powers of a new country, I may, perhaps, find what I should seek here in vain. In a few days more I shall bid farewell to the home where I was born, to all on earth who love me, and to these holy graves. Somewhat of the heavy weight of guilt seems to have been lifted off my soul since my father spake to me those comforting words, and pronounced me guiltless in intention of my cousin's death. And now I must wander forth: it is my doom. Come; the dew is falling, and it is almost dark. They will be looking for us at home."

Next morning, as we all sat together after breakfast, Neville gently broke his intention of departing in a few days.

"Neville! Neville! I cannot spare you!" cried my mother. "I have not very long to live. A few short years, and then you will be entirely free. But do not desert me in my old age. Let my eyes rest on you when I die; and see me laid by your father's side."

"Mother, you will still have three children left when

I am gone — children who have never caused you the pain and grief I have. They will comfort you better than I could. But for me there is a different lot. I cannot stay — I dare not! Mother, do not think me unkind; Heaven knows I would serve you with my life; but here I must not remain. If I do, I shall go mad.”

“Then, be it so, Neville,” she replied. “Be guided by the counsel of your own conscience. I know that you love me, and I would fain have you near me; but if it must be otherwise, I say Go in peace, and may my blessing be about you wherever you go!”

“Do you go alone, Neville?” asked Ruth, who had not spoken hitherto.

“Surely, Ruth, I go alone. Who would be the companion of a guilty wretch like me?”

“Neville, I will be your companion. You shall not go alone.”

“What, another!” said my mother, rocking herself gently in her chair, while the tears followed one another down her worn cheeks. “One by one they are leaving me, and soon I shall be childless.”

“It must not be, dear Ruth,” said Neville, firmly, but tenderly. “Do not fear, mother; I will not rob you. I will go alone.”

“Neville, I will go with you!” repeated Ruth in her downright, positive way, as though she were getting angry about it. “Listen, mother! Listen Caleb! Neville is going far away, among strangers who have no thought or care for him as we have. Afflicted as he has been, and as he may be again, is it kind, is it loving, to let him go alone while there is one of us free to accompany him? He might fall ill in a strange land, and

perish for want of some one to tend him. I am the one who can best be spared for this holy duty. Helen will be married in a short time; and on Caleb, now that he has become master of the school, will devolve the maintenance of our mother. I am bound to home by fewer ties than any of you; therefore my duty in this matter lies clear and straight before me. Tell me, am I wrong in what I have stated?"

"Ruth is right, as usual," said my mother. "She must accompany Neville. I may, perhaps, never see her again; but I shall know that my poor boy has one by his side who will never desert him, come what may; and in that thought lies my only comfort."

"O, mother, I am unworthy of so much love and care!" exclaimed Neville, as he kissed Ruth again and again. "Dear little sister! it is I who will watch over and protect you; and strive in all that I can, to lighten the weight of the great burden which you have taken on yourself for me. Now I have something to live for; something to care for beyond myself!"

A few days saw the preparations completed. I will not linger over the farewells that were uttered, or the wishes and hopes that were wafted after the wanderers by the sorrowing hearts they left behind.

A few months after their departure, Helen was married, and went to reside in the south of England. She is still, as she deserves to be, happy and prosperous.

The old house seemed very desolate, now that there were only my mother and I left to occupy it. For both of us it was haunted by many sweet memories of the past; and in those memories, as age crept over her, my mother almost entirely lived. Years have elapsed since

she was laid by my father's side in the little churchyard; one of my pleasantest recollections lies in the thought that I did all I could to make her last days comfortable and happy.

It was the anniversary of Philip's death when I penned the first lines of this humble history. Several weeks have elapsed since that day. In the interval I have received a letter from Ruth; and with an extract from her letter I cannot do better than conclude. She writes:

"Wild, lonely, and uncivilised, as this place was when we first came to it, comforts have sprung up around us one by one, until now we have scarcely anything to wish for in the way of temporal blessings. Neville has flocks and herds without number, and large tracts of land to call his own. The untamed energies of his nature find a vent in the vigilance, activity, and hard work required in the management of his affairs.

"He planted his foot in a wild solitude, farther in advance than any white man had done before. Society followed him, and now has overtaken him. He is looked up to, as the founder of the community, and is respected by every one. He is happy in the idea that he is working for the good of others as well as himself; and if the dark shadow ever crosses his mind for a moment, I hope I know how to chase it away, and bring back the sunshine, and hearten him on to fulfil the great task of his life."

THE LAZY TOUR OF TWO IDLE APPRENTICES.

CHAPTER I.

IN the autumn month of September, eighteen hundred and fifty-seven, wherein these presents bear date, two idle apprentices, exhausted by the long hot summer and the long hot work it had brought with it, ran away from their employer. They were bound to a highly meritorious lady (named Literature), of fair credit and repute, though, it must be acknowledged, not quite so highly esteemed in the City as she might be. This is the more remarkable, as there is nothing against the respectable lady in that quarter, but quite the contrary; her family having rendered eminent service to many famous citizens of London. It may be sufficient to name Sir William Walworth, Lord Mayor under King Richard the Second, at the time of Wat Tyler's insurrection, and Sir Richard Whittington: which latter distinguished man and magistrate was doubtless indebted to the lady's family for the gift of his celebrated cat. There is also strong reason to suppose that they rang the Highgate bells for him with their own hands.

The misguided young men who thus shirked their duty to the mistress from whom they had received many favors, were actuated by the low idea of making a per-

fectly idle trip, in any direction. They had no intention of going anywhere, in particular; they wanted to see nothing, they wanted to know nothing, they wanted to learn nothing, they wanted to do nothing. They wanted only to be idle. They took to themselves (after HOGARTH), the names of Mr. Thomas Idle and Mr. Francis Goodchild; but, there was not a moral pin to choose between them, and they were both idle in the last degree.

Between Francis and Thomas, however, there was this difference of character: Goodchild was laboriously idle, and would take upon himself any amount of pains and labour to assure himself that he was idle; in short, had no better idea of idleness than that it was useless industry. Thomas Idle, on the other hand, was an idler of the unmixed Irish or Neapolitan type; a passive idler, a born-and-bred idler, a consistent idler, who practised what he would have preached if he had not been too idle to preach; a one entire and perfect chrysolite of idleness.

The two idle apprentices found themselves, within a few hours of their escape, walking down into the North of England. That is to say, Thomas was lying in a meadow, looking at the railway trains as they passed over a distant viaduct — which was *his* idea of walking down into the North; while Francis was walking a mile due South against time — which was *his* idea of walking down into the North. In the meantime the day waned, and the milestones remained unconquered.

“Tom,” said Goodchild, “The sun is getting low. Up, and let us go forward!”

“Nay,” quoth Tomas Idle, “I have not done with Annie Laurie yet.” And he proceeded with that idle but popular ballad, to the effect that for the bonnie

young person of that name he would "lay him doon and dee," — equivalent, in prose, to lay him down and die.

"What an ass that fellow was!" cried Goodchild, with the bitter emphasis of contempt.

"Which fellow?" asked Thomas Idle.

"The fellow in your song. Lay him doon and dee! Finely he'd show off before the girl by doing *that*. A Sniveller! Why couldn't he get up, and punch somebody's head!"

"Whose?" asked Thomas Idle.

"Anybody's. Everybody's would be better than nobody's! If I fell into that state of mind about a girl, do you think I'd lay me doon and dee? No, sir," proceeded Goodchild, with a disparaging assumption of the Scottish accent, "I'd get oop and peetch into somebody. Wouldn't you?"

"I wouldn't have anything to do with her," yawned Thomas Idle. "Why should I take the trouble?"

"It's no trouble Tom, to fall in love," said Goodchild, shaking his head.

"It's trouble enough to fall out of it, once you're in it," retorted Tom. "So I keep out of it altogether. It would be better for you, if you did the same."

Mr. Goodchild, who is always in love with somebody, and not unfrequently with several objects at once, made no reply. He heaved a sigh of the kind which is termed by the lower orders "a bellowser," and then, heaving Mr. Idle on his feet (who was not half so heavy as the sigh), urged him northward.

These two had sent their personal baggage on by train: only retaining, each a knapsack. Idle now applied

himself to constantly regretting the train, to tracking it through the intricacies of Bradshaw's Guide, and finding out where it was now — and where now — and where now — and to asking what was the use of walking, when you could ride at such a pace as that. Was it to see the country? If that was the object, look at it out of carriage-windows. There was a great deal more of it to be seen there, than here. Besides, who wanted to see the country? Nobody. And, again, who ever did walk? Nobody. Fellows set off to walk, but they never did it. They came back and said they did, but they didn't. Then why should he walk? He wouldn't walk. He swore it by this milestone!

It was the fifth from London, so far had they penetrated into the North. Submitting to the powerful chain of argument, Goodchild proposed a return to the Metropolis, and a falling back upon Euston Square Terminus. Thomas assented with alacrity, and so they walked down into the North by the next morning's express, and carried their knapsacks in the luggage-van.

It was like all other expresses, as every express is and must be. It bore through the harvested country, a smell like a large washing-day, and a sharp issue of steam as from a huge brazen tea-urn. The greatest power in nature and art combined, it yet glided over dangerous heights in the sight of people looking up from fields and roads, as smoothly and unreally as a light miniature plaything. Now, the engine shrieked in hysterics of such intensity, that it seemed desirable that the men who had her in charge should hold her feet, slap her hands, and bring her to; now, burrowed into tunnels with a stubborn and undemonstrative energy so

confusing that the train seemed to be flying back into leagues of darkness. Here, were station after station, swallowed up by the express without stopping; here, stations where it fired itself in like a volley of cannonballs, swooped away four country-people with nosegays and three men of business with portmanteaus, and fired itself off again, bang, bang, bang! At long intervals were uncomfortable refreshment rooms, made more uncomfortable by the scorn of Beauty towards Beast, the public (but to whom she never relented, as Beauty did in the story, towards the other Beast), and where sensitive stomachs were fed, with a contemptuous sharpness occasioning indigestion. Here, again, were stations with nothing going but a bell, and wonderful wooden razors set aloft on great posts, shaving the air. In these fields, the horses, sheep, and cattle were well used to the thundering meteor, and didn't mind; in those, they were all set scampering together, and a herd of pigs secured after them. The pastoral country darkened, became coaly, became smoky, became infernal, got better, got worse, improved again, grew rugged, turned romantic; was a wood, a stream, a chain of hills, a gorge, a moor, a cathedral town, a fortified place, a waste. Now, miserable black dwellings, a black canal, and sick black towers of chimneys; now, a trim garden, where the flowers were bright and fair; now, a wilderness of hideous altars all a-blaze; now, the water meadows with their fairy rings; now, the mangy patch of unlet building ground outside the stagnant town, with the larger ring where the Circus was last week. The temperature changed, the dialect changed, the people changed, faces got sharper, manner got shorter, eyes got shrewder and harder; yet all so quickly, that the spruce guard in the

London uniform and silver lace, had not yet rumped his shirt-collar, delivered half the dispatches in his shining little pouch, or read his newspaper.

Carlisle! Idle and Goodchild had got to Carlisle. It looked congenially and delightfully idle. Something in the way of public amusement had happened last month, and something else was going to happen before Christmas; and, in the meantime there was a lecture on India for those who liked it — which Idle and Goodchild did not. Likewise, by those who liked them, there were impressions to be bought of all the vapid prints, going and gone, and of nearly all the vapid books. For those who wanted to put anything in missionary boxes, here were the boxes. For those who wanted the Reverend Mr. Podgers (artist's proofs, thirty shillings), here was Mr. Podgers to any amount. Not less gracious and abundant, Mr. Codgers, also of the vineyard, but opposed to Mr. Podgers, brotherly tooth and nail. Here, were guide-books to the neighbouring antiquities, and eke the Lake country, in several dry and husky sorts; here, many physically and morally impossible heads of both sexes, for young ladies to copy, in the exercise of the art of drawing; here, further, a large impression of Mr. SPURGEON, solid as to the flesh, not to say even something gross. The working young men of Carlisle were drawn up, with their hands in their pockets, across the pavements, four and six abreast, and appeared (much to the satisfaction of Mr. Idle) to have nothing else to do. The working and growing young women of Carlisle, from the age of twelve upwards, promenaded the streets in the cool of the evening, and rallied the said young men. Sometimes the young men rallied the young women, as in the case of a group gathered round an accordion-player, from

among whom a young man advanced behind a young woman for whom he appeared to have a tenderness, and hinted to her that he was there and playful, by giving her (he wore clogs) a kick.

On market morning, Carlisle woke up amazingly, and became (to the two Idle Apprentices) disagreeably and reproachfully busy. There were its cattle market, its sheep market, and its pig market down by the river, with raw-boned and shock-headed Rob Roys hiding their Lowland dresses beneath heavy plaids, prowling in and out among the animals, and flavouring the air with fumes of whiskey. There was its corn market down the main street, with hum of chaffering over open sacks. There was its general market in the street too, with heather brooms on which the purple flower still flourished, and heather baskets primitive and fresh to behold. With women trying on clogs and caps at open stalls, and "Bible stalls" adjoining. With "Doctor Mantle's Dispensary for the cure of all Human Maladies and no charge for advice," and with Doctor Mantle's "Laboratory of Medical, Chemical, and Botanical Science" — both healing institutions established on one pair of trestles, one board, and one sun-blind. With the renowned phrenologist from London, begging to be favoured (at sixpence each) with the company of clients of both sexes, to whom, on examination of their heads, he would make revelations "enabling him or her to know themselves." Through all these bargains and blessings, the recruiting-serjeant watchfully elbowed his way, a thread of War in the peaceful skein. Likewise on the walls were printed hints that the Oxford Blues might not be indisposed to hear of a few fine active young men; and that whereas the standard of that distinguished corps is full six feet,

"growing lads of five feet eleven" need not absolutely despair of being accepted.

Scenting the morning air more pleasantly than the buried majesty of Denmark did, Messrs. Idle and Goodchild rode away from Carlisle at eight o'clock one forenoon, bound for the village of Heske, Newmarket, some fourteen miles distant. Goodchild (who had already begun to doubt whether he was idle: as his way always is when he has nothing to do), had read of a certain black old Cumberland hill or mountain, called Carrock, or Carrock Fell; and had arrived at the conclusion that it would be the culminating triumph of Idleness to ascend the same. Thomas Idle, dwelling on the pains inseparable from that achievement, had expressed the strongest doubts of the expediency, and even of the sanity, of the enterprise; but Goodchild had carried his point, and they rode away.

Up hill and down hill, and twisting to the right, and twisting to the left, and with old Skiddaw (who has vaunted himself a great deal more than his merits deserve; but that is rather the way of the Lake country), dodging the apprentices in a picturesque and pleasant manner. Good, weather-proof, warm, peasant houses, well white-limed, scantily dotting the road. Clean children coming out to look, carrying other clean children as big as themselves. Harvest still lying out and much rained upon; here and there, harvest still unreaped. Well cultivated gardens attached to the cottages, with plenty of produce forced out of their hard soil. Lonely nooks, and wild; but people can be born, and married, and buried in such nooks, and can live and love, and be loved, there as elsewhere, thank God! (Mr. Goodchild's remark.) By-and-by, the village. Black, coarse-stoned,

rough-windowed houses; some with outer staircases, like Swiss houses; a sinuous and stony gutter winding up hill and round the corner, by way of street. All the children running out directly. Women pausing in washing, to peep from doorways and very little windows. Such were the observations of Messrs. Idle and Goodchild, as their conveyance stopped at the village shoemaker's. Old Carrock gloomed down upon it all in a very ill-tempered state; and rain was beginning.

The village shoemaker declined to have anything to do with Carrock. No visitors went up Carrock. No visitors came there at all. Aa' the world ganged awa' yon. The driver appealed to the Innkeeper. The Innkeeper had two men working in the fields, and one of them should be called in, to go up Carrock as guide. Messrs. Idle and Goodchild, highly approving, entered the Innkeeper's house, to drink whiskey and eat oak-cake.

The Innkeeper was not idle enough — was not idle at all, which was a great fault in him — but was a fine specimen of a north-country man, or any kind of man. He had a ruddy cheek, a bright eye, a well-knit frame, an immense hand, a cheery outspeaking voice, and a straight, bright, broad look. He had a drawing-room, too, up-stairs, which was worth a visit to the Cumberland Fells. (This was Mr. Francis Goodchild's opinion, in which Mr. Thomas Idle did not concur.)

The ceiling of this drawing-room was so crossed and re-crossed by beams of unequal lengths, radiating from a centre in a corner, that it looked like a broken star-fish. The room was comfortably and solidly furnished with good mahogany and horsehair. It had a snug fire-side, and a couple of well-curtained windows, looking out upon the wild country behind the house. What it most

developed was, an unexpected taste for little ornaments and nick-nacks, of which it contained a most surprising number. They were not very various, consisting in great part of waxen babies with their limbs more or less mutilated, appealing on one leg to the parental affections from under little cupping-glasses; but, Uncle Tom was there, in crockery, receiving theological instructions from Miss Eva, who grew out of his side like a wen, in an exceedingly rough state of profile propagandism. Engravings of Mr. Hunt's country-boy, before and after his pie, were on the wall, divided by a highly-coloured nautical piece, the subject of which had all her colors (and more) flying, and was making great way through a sea of a regular pattern, like a lady's collar. A benevolent elderly gentleman of the last century, with a powdered head, kept guard, in oil and varnish, over a most perplexing piece of furniture on a table; in appearance between a driving seat and an angular knife-box, but, when opened, a musical instrument of tinkling wires, exactly like David's harp packed for travelling. Everything became a nick-nack in this curious room. The copper tea-kettle, burnished up to the highest point of glory, took his station on a stand of his own at the greatest possible distance from the fire-place, and said, "By your leave, not a kittle, but a bijou." The Staffordshire-ware butter-dish with the cover on, got upon a little round occasional table in a window, with a worked top, and announced itself to the two chairs accidentally placed there, as an aid to polite conversation, a graceful trifle in china to be chatted over by callers, as they airily trifled away the visiting moments of a butterfly existence, in that rugged old village on the Cumberland Fells. The very footstool

could not keep the floor, but got upon the sofa, and therefrom proclaimed itself, in high relief of white and liver-colored wool, a favourite spaniel coiled up for repose. Though, truly, in spite of its bright glass eyes, the spaniel was the least successful assumption in the collection: being perfectly flat, and dismally suggestive of a recent mistake in sitting down, on the part of some corpulent member of the family.

There were books, too, in this room; books on the table, books on the chimney-piece, books in an open press in the corner. Fielding was there, and Smollett was there, and Steele and Addison were there, in dispersed volumes; and there were tales of those who go down to the sea in ships, for windy nights; and there was really a choice of good books for rainy days or fine. It was so very pleasant to see these things in such a lonesome by-place — so very agreeable to find these evidences of a taste, however homely, that went beyond the beautiful cleanliness and trimness of the house — so fanciful to imagine what a wonder the room must be to the little children born in the gloomy village — what grand impressions of it those of them who became wanderers over the earth would carry away; and how, at distant ends of the world, some old voyagers would die, cherishing the belief that the finest apartment known to men was once in the Hesket-Newmarket Inn, in rare old Cumberland — it was such a charmingly lazy pursuit to entertain these rambling thoughts over the choice oat-cake and the genial whiskey, that Mr. Idle and Mr. Goodchild never asked themselves how it came to pass that the men in the fields were never heard of more, how the stalwart landlord replaced them without explanation, how his dog-cart came to be waiting at the

door, and how everything was arranged without the least arrangement, for climbing to old Carrock's shoulders, and standing on his head.

Without a word of inquiry, therefore, The Two Idle Apprentices drifted out resignedly into a fine, soft, close, drowsy, penetrating rain; got into the landlord's light dog-cart, and rattled off, through the village, for the foot of Carrock. The journey at the outset was not remarkable. The Cumberland road went up and down like other roads; the Cumberland curs burst out from backs of cottages and barked like other curs, and the Cumberland peasantry stared after the dog-cart amazedly, as long as it was in sight, like the rest of their race. The approach to the foot of the mountain resembled the approaches to the feet of most other mountains all over the world. The cultivation gradually ceased, the trees grew gradually rare, the road became gradually rougher, and the sides of the mountain looked gradually more and more lofty, and more and more difficult to get up. The dog-cart was left at a lonely farm-house. The landlord borrowed a large umbrella, and, assuming in an instant the character of the most cheerful and adventurous of guides, led the way to the ascent. Mr. Goodchild looked eagerly at the top of the mountain, and, feeling apparently that he was now going to be very lazy indeed, shone all over wonderfully to the eye, under the influence of the contentment within and the moisture without. Only in the bosom of Mr. Thomas Idle did Despondency now hold her gloomy state. He kept it a secret; but he would have given a very handsome sum, when the ascent began, to have been back again at the inn. The sides of Carrock looked fearfully steep, and the top of Carrock was hidden in mist. The rain was

falling faster and faster. The knees of Mr. Idle — always weak on walking excursions — shivered and shook with fear and damp. The wet was already penetrating through the young man's outer coat to a brand new shooting-jacket, for which he had reluctantly paid the large sum of two guineas on leaving town; he had no stimulating refreshment about him but a small packet of clammy gingerbread nuts; he had nobody to give him an arm, nobody to push him gently behind, nobody to pull him up tenderly in front, nobody to speak to who really felt the difficulties of the ascent, the dampness of the rain, the denseness of the mist, and the unutterable folly of climbing, undriven, up any steep place in the world, when there is level ground within reach to walk on instead. Was it for this that Thomas had left London? London, where there are nice short walks in level public gardens, with benches of repose set up at convenient distances for weary travellers — London, where rugged stone is humanely pounded into little lumps for the road, and intelligently shaped into smooth slabs for the pavement! No! it was not for the laborious ascent of the crags of Carrock that Idle had left his native city and travelled to Cumberland. Never did he feel more disastrously convinced that he had committed a very grave error in judgment than when he found himself standing in the rain at the bottom of a steep mountain, and knew that the responsibility rested on his weak shoulders of actually getting to the top of it.

The honest landlord went first, the beaming Goodchild followed, the mournful Idle brought up the rear. From time to time, the two foremost members of the expedition changed places in the order of march; but the rearguard never altered his position. Up the mountain

or down the mountain, in the water or out of it, over the rocks, through the bogs, skirting the heather, Mr. Thomas Idle was always the last, and was always the man who had to be looked after and waited for. At first the ascent was delusively easy: the sides of the mountain sloped gradually, and the material of which they were composed was a soft spongy turf, very tender and pleasant to walk upon. After a hundred yards or so, however, the verdant scene and the easy slope disappeared, and the rocks began. Not noble, massive rocks, standing upright, keeping a certain regularity in their positions, and possessing, now and then, flat tops to sit upon, but little, irritating, comfortless rocks, littered about anyhow by Nature; treacherous, disheartening rocks of all sorts of small shapes and small sizes, bruisers of tender toes and trippers-up of wavering feet. When these impediments were passed, heather and slough followed. Here the steepness of the ascent was slightly mitigated; and here the exploring party of three turned round to look at the view below them. The scene of the moorland and the fields was like a feeble water-colour drawing half sponged out. The mist was darkening, the rain was thickening, the trees were dotted about like spots of faint shadow, the division-lines which mapped out the fields were all getting blurred together, and the lonely farm-house where the dog-cart had been left, loomed spectral in the grey light like the last human dwelling at the end of the habitable world. Was this a sight worth climbing to see? Surely — surely not!

Up again — for the top of Carrock is not reached yet. The landlord, just as good-tempered and obliging as he was at the bottom of the mountain. Mr. Goodchild brighter in the eyes and rosier in the face than ever;

full of cheerful remarks and apt quotations; and walking with a springiness of step wonderful to behold. Mr. Idle, farther and farther in the rear, with the water squeaking in the toes of his boots, with his two-guinea shooting-jacket clinging damply to his aching sides, with his over-coat so full of rain, and standing out so pyramidically stiff, in consequence, from his shoulders downwards, that he felt as if he was walking in a gigantic extinguisher — the despairing spirit within him representing but too aptly the candle that had just been put out. Up and up and up again, till a ridge is reached, and the outer edge of the mist on the summit of Carrock is darkly and drizzlingly near. Is this the top? No, nothing like the top. It is an aggravating peculiarity of all mountains, that, although they have only one top when they are seen (as they ought always to be seen) from below, they turn out to have a perfect eruption of false tops whenever the traveller is sufficiently ill-advised to go out of his way for the purpose of ascending them. Carrock is but a trumpery little mountain of fifteen hundred feet, and it presumes to have false tops, and even precipices, as if it was Mont Blanc. No matter; Goodchild enjoys it, and will go on; and Idle, who is afraid of being left behind by himself, must follow. On entering the edge of the mist, the landlord stops, and says he hopes that it will not get any thicker. It is twenty years since he last ascended Carrock, and it is barely possible, if the mist increases, that the party may be lost on the mountain. Goodchild hears this dreadful intimation, and is not in the least impressed by it. He marches for the top that is never to be found, as if he was the Wandering Jew, bound to go on for ever, in defiance of everything. The landlord faithfully accompa-

nies him. The two, to the dim eye of Idle, far below, look in the exaggerative mist, like a pair of friendly giants, mounting the steps of some invisible castle together. Up and up, and then down a little, and then up, and then along a strip of level ground, and then up again. The wind, a wind unknown in the happy valley, blows keen and strong; the rain-mist gets impenetrable; a dreary little cairn of stones appears. The landlord adds one to the heap, first walking all round the cairn as if he were about to perform an incantation, then dropping the stone on to the top of the heap with the gesture of a magician adding an ingredient to a cauldron in full bubble. Goodchild sits down by the cairn as if it was his study-table at home; Idle, drenched and panting, stands up with his back to the wind, ascertains distinctly that this is the top at last, looks round with all the little curiosity that is left in him, and gets, in return, a magnificent view of — Nothing!

The effect of this sublime spectacle on the minds of the exploring party is a little injured by the nature of the direct conclusion to which the sight of it points — the said conclusion being that the mountain mist has actually gathered round them, as the landlord feared it would. It now becomes imperatively necessary to settle the exact situation of the farm-house in the valley at which the dog-cart has been left, before the travellers attempt to descend. While the landlord is endeavouring to make this discovery in his own way, Mr. Goodchild plunges his hand under his wet coat, draws out a little red morocco-case, opens it, and displays to the view of his companions a neat pocket-compass. The north is found, the point at which the farm-house is situated is settled, and the descent begins. After a little

downward walking, Idle (behind as usual) sees his fellow-travellers turn aside sharply — tries to follow them — loses them in the mist — is shouted after, waited for, recovered — and then finds that a halt has been ordered, partly on his account, partly for the purpose of again consulting the compass.

The point in debate is settled as before between Goodchild and the landlord, and the expedition moves on, not down the mountain, but marching straight forward round the slope of it. The difficulty of following this new route is acutely felt by Thomas Idle. He finds the hardship of walking at all, greatly increased by the fatigue of moving his feet straight forward along the side of a slope, when their natural tendency, at every step, is to turn off at a right angle, and go straight down the declivity. Let the reader imagine himself to be walking along the roof of a barn, instead of up or down it, and he will have an exact idea of the pedestrian difficulty in which the travellers had now involved themselves. In ten minutes more Idle was lost in the distance again, was shouted for, waited for, recovered as before; found Goodchild repeating his observation of the compass, and remonstrated warmly against the sideway route that his companions persisted in following. It appeared to the uninstructed mind of Thomas that when three men want to get to the bottom of a mountain, their business is to walk down it; and he put this view of the case, not only with emphasis, but even with some irritability. He was answered from the scientific eminence of the compass on which his companions were mounted, that there was a frightful chasm somewhere near the foot of Carrock, called The Black Arches, into which the travellers were sure to march in the mist, if they risked continuing the

descent from the place where they had now halted. Idle received this answer with the silent respect which was due to the commanders of the expedition, and followed along the roof of the barn, or rather the side of the mountain, reflecting upon the assurance which he received on starting again, that the object of the party was only to gain "a certain point," and, this haven attained, to continue the descent afterwards until the foot of Carrock was reached. Though quite unexceptionable as an abstract form of expression, the phrase "a certain point" has the disadvantage of sounding rather vaguely when it is pronounced on unknown ground, under a canopy of mist much thicker than a London fog. Nevertheless, after the compass, this phrase was all the clue the party had to hold by, and Idle clung to the extreme end of it as hopefully as he could.

More side way walking, thicker and thicker mist, all sorts of points reached except the "certain point;" third loss of Idle, third shouts for him, third recovery of him, third consultation of compass. Mr. Goodchild draws it tenderly from his pocket, and prepares to adjust it on a stone. Something falls on the turf — it is the glass. Something else drops immediately after — it is the needle. The compass is broken, and the exploring party is lost!

It is the practice of the English portion of the human race to receive all great disasters in dead silence. Mr. Goodchild restored the useless compass to his pocket without saying a word, Mr. Idle looked at the landlord, and the landlord looked at Mr. Idle. There was nothing for it now but to go on blindfold, and trust to the chapter of chances. Accordingly, the lost travellers moved forward, still walking round the slope of the

mountain, still desperately resolved to avoid the Black Arches, and to succeed in reaching the "certain point."

A quarter of an hour brought them to the brink of a ravine, at the bottom of which there flowed a muddy little stream. Here another halt was called, and another consultation took place. The landlord, still clinging pertinaciously to the idea of reaching the "point," voted for crossing the ravine and going on round the slope of the mountain. Mr. Goodchild, to the great relief of his fellow-traveller, took another view of the case, and backed Mr. Idle's proposal to descend Carrock at once, at any hazard — the rather as the running stream was a sure guide to follow from the mountain to the valley. Accordingly, the party descended to the rugged and stony banks of the stream; and here again Thomas lost ground sadly, and fell far behind his travelling companions. Not much more than six weeks had elapsed since he had sprained one of his ankles, and he began to feel this same ankle getting rather weak when he found himself among the stones that were strewn about the running water. Goodchild and the landlord were getting farther and farther ahead of him. He saw them cross the stream and disappear round a projection on its banks. He heard them shout the moment after as a signal that they had halted and were waiting for him. Answering the shout, he mended his pace, crossed the stream where they had crossed it, and was within one step of the opposite bank, when his foot slipped on a wet stone, his weak ankle gave a twist outwards, a hot, rending, tearing pain ran through it at the same moment, and down fell the idlest of the Two Idle Apprentices, crippled in an instant.

The situation was now, in plain terms, one of absolute danger. There lay Mr. Idle writhing with pain, there was the mist as thick as ever, there was the landlord as completely lost as the strangers whom he was conducting, and there was the compass broken in Goodchild's pocket. To leave the wretched Thomas on unknown ground was plainly impossible; and to get him to walk with a badly sprained ankle seemed equally out of the question. However, Goodchild (brought back by his cry for help) bandaged the ankle with a pocket-handkerchief, and assisted by the landlord, raised the crippled Apprentice to his legs, offered him a shoulder to lean on, and exhorted him for the sake of the whole party to try if he could walk. Thomas, assisted by the shoulder on one side, and a stick on the other, did try, with what pain and difficulty those only can imagine who have sprained an ankle and have had to tread on it afterwards. At a pace adapted to the feeble hobbling of a newly-lamed man, the lost party moved on, perfectly ignorant whether they were on the right side of the mountain or the wrong, and equally uncertain how long Idle would be able to contend with the pain in his ankle, before he gave in altogether and fell down again, unable to stir another step.

Slowly and more slowly, as the clog of crippled Thomas weighed heavily and more heavily on the march of the expedition, the lost travellers followed the windings of the stream, till they came to a faintly-marked cart-track, branching off nearly at right angles, to the left. After a little consultation it was resolved to follow this dim vestige of a road in the hope that it might lead to some farm or cottage, at which Idle could be left in safety. It was now getting on towards the afternoon,

and it was fast becoming more than doubtful whether the party, delayed in their progress as they now were, might not be overtaken by the darkness before the right route was found, and be condemned to pass the night on the mountain, without bit or drop to comfort them, in their wet clothes.

The cart-track grew fainter and fainter, until it was washed out altogether by another little stream, dark, turbulent, and rapid. The landlord suggested, judging by the colour of the water, that it must be flowing from one of the lead mines in the neighbourhood of Carrock; and the travellers accordingly kept by the stream for a little while, in the hope of possibly wandering towards help in that way. After walking forward about two hundred yards, they came upon a mine indeed, but a mine, exhausted and abandoned; a dismal, ruinous place, with nothing but the wreck of its works and buildings left to speak for it. Here, there were a few sheep feeding. The landlord looked at them earnestly, thought he recognised the marks on them — then thought he did not — finally gave up the sheep in despair — and walked on, just as ignorant of the whereabouts of the party as ever.

The march in the dark, literally as well as metaphorically in the dark, had now been continued for three-quarters of an hour from the time when the crippled Apprentice had met with his accident. Mr. Idle, with all the will to conquer the pain in his ankle, and to hobble on, found the power rapidly failing him, and felt that another ten minutes at most would find him at the end of his last physical resources. He had just made up his mind on this point, and was about to communicate the dismal result of his reflections to his companions,

when the mist suddenly brightened, and began to lift straight ahead. In another minute, the landlord, who was in advance, proclaimed that he saw a tree. Before long, other trees appeared — then a cottage — then a house beyond the cottage, and a familiar line of road rising behind it. Last of all, Carrock itself loomed darkly into view, far away to the right hand. The party had not only got down the mountain without knowing how, but had wandered away from it in the mist, without knowing why — away, far down on the very moor by which they had approached the base of Carrock that morning.

The happy lifting of the mist, and the still happier discovery that the travellers had groped their way, though by a very round-about direction, to within a mile or so of the part of the valley in which the farm-house was situated, restored Mr. Idle's sinking spirits and reanimated his failing strength. While the landlord ran off to get the dog-cart, Thomas was assisted by Goodchild to the cottage which had been the first building seen when the darkness brightened, and was propped up against the garden-wall, like an artist's lay-figure waiting to be forwarded, until the dog-cart should arrive from the farm-house below. In due time — and a very long time it seemed to Mr. Idle — the rattle of wheels was heard, and the crippled Apprentice was lifted into his seat. As the dog-cart was driven back to the inn, the landlord related an anecdote which he had just heard at the farm-house, of an unhappy man who had been lost, like his two guests and himself, on Carrock; who had passed the night there alone; who had been found the next morning, "scared and starved;" and who never went out afterwards, except on his way to the grave. Mr. Idle heard

this sad story, and derived at least one useful impression from it. Bad as the pain in his ankle was, he contrived to bear it patiently, for he felt grateful that a worse accident had not befallen him in the wilds of Carrock.

CHAPTER II.

THE dog-cart, with Mr. Thomas Idle and his ankle on the hanging seat behind, Mr. Francis Goodchild and the Innkeeper in front, and the rain in spouts and and splashes everywhere, made the best of its way back to the little Inn; the broken moor country looking like miles of Pre-Adamite sop, or the ruins of some enormous jorum of antediluvian toast-and-water. The trees dripped; the eaves of the scattered cottages dripped; the barren stone-walls dividing the land, dripped; the yelping dogs dripped; carts and waggons under ill-roofed penthouses, dripped; melancholy cocks and hens perching on their shafts, or seeking shelter underneath them, dripped; Mr. Goodchild dripped; Francis Idle dripped; the Innkeeper dripped; the mare dripped; the vast curtains of mist and cloud that passed before the shadowy forms of the hills, streamed water as they were drawn across the landscape. Down such steep pitches that the mare seemed to be trotting on her head, and up such steep pitches that she seemed to have a supplementary leg in her tail, the dog-cart jolted and tilted back to the village. It was too wet for the women to look out, it was too wet even for the children to look out; all the doors and windows were closed, and the only sign of life or motion was in the rain-punctured puddles.

Whisky and oil to Thomas Idle's ankle, and whisky without oil to Francis Goodchild's stomach, produced an

agreeable change in the systems of both: soothing Mr. Idle's pain, which was sharp before, and sweetening Mr. Goodchild's temper, which was sweet before. Port-manteaus being then opened and clothes changed, Mr. Goodchild, through having no change of outer garments but broadcloth and velvet, suddenly became a magnificent portent in the Innkeeper's house, a shining frontispiece to the Fashions for the month, and a frightful anomaly in the Cumberland village.

Greatly ashamed of his splendid appearance, the conscious Goodchild quenched it as much as possible, in the shadow of Thomas Idle's ankle, and in a corner of the little covered carriage that started with them for Wigton — a most desirable carriage for any country, except for its having a flat roof and no sides; which caused the plumps of rain accumulating on the roof to play vigorous games of bagatelle into the interior all the way, and to score immensely. It was comfortable to see how the people coming back in open carts from Wigton market made no more of the rain than if it were sunshine; how the Wigton policeman taking a country walk of half-a-dozen miles (apparently for pleasure), in resplendent uniform, accepted saturation as his normal state; how clerks and schoolmasters in black, loitered along the road without umbrellas, getting varnished at every step; how the Cumberland girls, coming out to look after the Cumberland cows, shook the rain from their eyelashes and laughed it away; and how the rain continued to fall upon all, as it only does fall in hill countries.

Wigton market was over, and its bare booths were smoking with rain all down the street. Mr. Thomas Idle, melo-dramatically carried to the Inn's first floor, and laid upon three chairs (he should have had the sofa, if there

had been one), Mr. Goodchild went to the window to take an observation of Wigton, and report what he saw to his disabled companion.

"Brother Francis, brother Francis," cried Thomas Idle. "What do you see from the turret?"

"I see," said Brother Francis, "what I hope and believe to be one of the most dismal places ever seen by eyes. I see the houses with their roofs of dull black, their stained fronts, and their dark-rimmed windows, looking as if they were all in mourning. As every little puff of wind comes down the street, I see a perfect train of rain let off along the wooden stalls in the market-place and exploded against me. I see a very big gas-lamp in the centre which I know, by a secret instinct, will not be lighted to-night. I see a pump, with a trivet underneath its spout whereon to stand the vessels that are brought to be filled with water. I see a man come to pump, and he pumps very hard, but no water follows and he strolls empty away."

"Brother Francis, brother Francis," cried Thomas Idle, "what more do you see from the turret, besides the man and the pump, and the trivet and the houses all in mourning and the rain?"

"I see," said Brother Francis, "one, two, three, four five, linen-draper's shops in front of me. I see a linen-draper's shop next door to the right — and there are five more linen-draper's shops down the corner to the left. Eleven homicidal linen-draper's shops within a short stone's throw, each with its hands at the throats of all the rest! Over the small first-floor of one of these linen-draper's shops appears the wonderful inscription, BANK."

"Brother Francis, brother Francis," cried Thomas Idle, "what more do you see from the turret, besides

the eleven homicidal linen-drappers' shops, and the wonderful inscription 'Bank' on the small first-floor, and the man and the pump and the trivet, and the houses all in mourning and the rain?"

"I see," said Brother Francis, "the depository for Christian Knowledge, and through the dark vapour I think I again make out Mr. Spurgeon looming heavily. Her Majesty the Queen, God bless her, printed in colours, I am sure I see. I see the Illustrated London News of several weeks ago, and I see a sweetmeat shop — which the proprietor calls a 'Salt Warehouse' — with one small female child in a cotton bonnet looking in on tip-toe, oblivious of rain. And I see a watch-maker's, with only three great pale watches of a dull metal hanging in his window, each in a separate pane."

"Brother Francis, brother Francis," cried Thomas Idle, "what more do you see of Wigton, besides these objects, and the man and the pump and the trivet and the houses all in mourning and the rain?"

"I see nothing more," said Brother Francis, "and there is nothing more to see, except the curlpaper bill of the theatre, which was opened and shut last week (the manager's family played all the parts), and the short, square, chinky omnibus that goes to the railway, and leads too rattling a life over the stones to hold together long. O yes! Now, I see two men with their hands in their pockets and their backs towards me."

"Brother Francis, brother Francis," cried Thomas Idle, "what do you make out from the turret, of the expression of the two men with their hands in their pockets and their backs towards you?"

"They are mysterious men," said brother Francis, "with inscrutable backs. They keep their backs towards

me with persistency. If one turns an inch in any direction, the other turns an inch in the same direction, and no more. They turn very stiffly, on a very little pivot, in the middle of the market-place. Their appearance is partly of a mining, partly of a ploughing, partly of a stable, character. They are looking at nothing — very hard. Their backs are slouched, and their legs are curved with much standing about. Their pockets are loose and dog's-eared, on account of their hands being always in them. They stand to be rained upon, without any movement of impatience or dissatisfaction, and they keep so close together that an elbow of each jostles an elbow of the other, but they never speak. They spit at times, but speak not. I see it growing darker and darker, and still I see them, sole visible population of the place, standing to be rained upon with their backs towards me, and looking at nothing very hard."

"Brother Francis, brother Francis!" cried Thomas Idle, "before you draw down the blind of the turret and come in to have your head scorched by the hot gas, see if you can, and impart to me, something of the expression of those two amazing men."

"The murky shadows," said Francis Goodchild, "are gathering fast; and the wings of evening, and the wings of coal, are folding over Wigton. Still, they look at nothing very hard, with their backs towards me. Ah! Now, they turn, and I see —"

"Brother Francis, brother Francis," cried Thomas Idle, "tell me quickly what you see of the two men of Wigton!"

"I see," said Francis Goodchild, "that they have no expression at all. And now the town goes to sleep,

undazzled by the large unlighted lamp in the market-place; and let no man wake it."

At the close of the next day's journey, Thomas Idle's ankle became much swollen and inflamed. There are reasons which will presently explain themselves for not publicly indicating the exact direction in which that journey lay, or the place in which it ended. It was a long day's shaking of Thomas Idle over the rough roads, and a long day's getting out and going on before the horses, and fagging up hills, and scouring down hills, on the part of Mr. Goodchild, who in the fatigues of such labours congratulated himself on attaining a high point of idleness. It was at a little town, still in Cumberland, that they halted for the night, — a very little town, with the purple and brown moor close upon its one street; a curious little ancient market-cross set up in the midst of it; and the town itself looking, much as if it were a collection of great stones piled on end by the Druids long ago, which a few recluse people had since hollowed out for habitations.

"Is there a doctor here?" asked Mr. Goodchild, on his knee, of the motherly landlady of the little Inn: stopping in his examination of Mr. Idle's ankle, with the aid of a candle.

"Ey, my word!" said the landlady, glancing doubtfully at the ankle for herself; "there's Doctor Speddie."

"Is he a good Doctor?"

"Ey!" said the landlady, "I ca' him so. A' cooms efther nae doctor that I ken. Mair nor which, a's just THE doctor heer."

"Do you think he is at home!"

Her reply was, "Gang awa', Jock, and bring him."

Jock, a white-headed boy, who, under pretence of

stirring up some bay salt in a basin of water for the laving of this unfortunate ankle, had greatly enjoyed himself for the last ten minutes in splashing the carpet, set off promptly. A very few minutes had elapsed when he showed the Doctor in, by tumbling against the door before him and bursting it open with his head.

"Gently, Jock, gently," said the doctor as he advanced with a quiet step. "Gentlemen, a good evening. I am sorry that my presence is required here. A slight accident, I hope? A slip and a fall? Yes, yes, yes. Carrock, indeed? Hah! Does that pain you, sir? No doubt, it does. It is the great connecting ligament here, you see, that has been badly strained. Time and rest, sir! They are often the recipe in greater cases," with a slight sigh, "and often the recipe in small. I can send a lotion to relieve you, but we must leave the cure to time and rest."

This he said, holding Idle's foot on his knee between his two hands, as he sat over against him. He had touched it tenderly and skilfully in explanation of what he said, and, when his careful examination was completed, softly returned it to its former horizontal position on a chair.

He spoke with a little irresolution whenever he began, but afterwards fluently. He was a tall, thin, large-boned, old gentleman, with an appearance at first sight of being hard-featured; but, at a second glance, the mild expression of his face and some particular touches of sweetness and patience about his mouth, corrected this impression and assigned his long professional rides, by day and night, in the bleak hill-weather, as the true cause of that appearance. He stooped very little, though past seventy and very grey. His dress was more like

that of a clergyman than a country doctor, being a plain black suit, and a plain white neck-kerchief tied behind like a band. His black was the worse for wear, and there were darns in his coat, and his linen was a little frayed at the hems and edges. He might have been poor — it was likely enough in that out-of-the-way spot — or he might have been a little self-forgetful and eccentric. Anyone could have seen directly, that he had neither wife nor child at home. He had a scholarly air with him, and that kind of considerate humanity towards others which claimed a gentle consideration for himself. Mr. Goodchild made this study of him while he was examining the limb, and as he laid it down. Mr. Goodchild wishes to add that he considers it a very good likeness.

It came out in the course of a little conversation, that Doctor Speddie was acquainted with some friends of Thomas Idle's, and had, when a young man, passed some years in Thomas Idle's birthplace on the other side of England. Certain idle labours, the fruit of Mr. Goodchild's apprenticeship, also happened to be well known to him. The lazy travellers were thus placed on a more intimate footing with the Doctor than the casual circumstances of the meeting would of themselves have established; and when Doctor Speddie rose to go home, remarking that he would send his assistant with the lotion, Francis Goodchild said that was unnecessary, for, by the Doctor's leave, he would accompany him, and bring it back. (Having done nothing to fatigue himself for a full quarter of an hour, Francis began to fear that he was not in a state of idleness.)

Doctor Speddie politely assented to the proposition of Francis Goodchild, "as it would give him the pleasure

of enjoying a few more minutes of Mr. Goodchild's society than he could otherwise have hoped for," and they went out together into the village street. The rain had nearly ceased, the clouds had broken before a cool wind from the north-east, and stars were shining from the peaceful heights beyond them.

Doctor Speddie's house was the last house in the place. Beyond it, lay the moor, all dark and lonesome. The wind moaned in a low, dull, shivering manner round the little garden, like a houseless creature that knew the winter was coming. It was exceedingly wild and solitary. "Roses," said the Doctor, when Goodchild touched some wet leaves overhanging the stone porch; "but they get cut to pieces."

The Doctor opened the door with a key he carried, and led the way into a low but pretty ample hall with rooms on either side. The door of one of these stood open, and the Doctor entered it, with a word of welcome to his guest. It, too, was a low room, half surgery and half parlor, with shelves of books and bottles against the walls, which were of a very dark hue. There was a fire in the grate, the night being damp and chill. Leaning against the chimney-piece looking down into it, stood the Doctor's Assistant.

A man of a most remarkable appearance. Much older than Mr. Goodchild had expected, for he was at least two-and-fifty; but, that was nothing. What was startling in him was his remarkable paleness. His large black eyes, his sunken cheeks, his long and heavy iron-grey hair, his wasted hands, and even the attenuation of his figure, were at first forgotten in his extraordinary pallor. There was no vestige of color in the man. When he

turned his face, Francis Goodchild started as if a stone figure had looked round at him.

"Mr. Lorn," said the Doctor. "Mr. Goodchild."

The Assistant, in a distraught way — as if he had forgotten something — as if he had forgotten everything, even to his own name and himself — acknowledged the visitor's presence, and stepped further back into the shadow of the wall behind him. But, he was so pale that his face stood out in relief against the dark wall, and really could not be hidden so.

"Mr. Goodchild's friend has met with an accident, Lorn," said Doctor Speddie. "We want the lotion for a bad sprain."

A pause.

"My dear fellow, you are more than usually absent to-night. The lotion for a bad sprain."

"Ah! yes! Directly."

He was evidently relieved to turn away, and to take his white face and his wild eyes to a table in a recess among the bottles. But, though he stood there, compounding the lotion with his back towards them, Goodchild could not, for many moments, withdraw his gaze from the man. When he at length did so, he found the Doctor observing him, with some trouble in his face. "He is absent," explained the Doctor, in a low voice. "Always absent. Very absent."

"Is he ill?"

"No, not ill."

"Unhappy?"

"I have my suspicions that he was," assented the Doctor, "once."

Francis Goodchild could not but observe that the Doctor accompanied these words with a benignant and

protecting glance at their subject, in which there was much of the expression with which an attached father might have looked at a heavily afflicted son. Yet, that they were not father and son must have been plain to most eyes. The Assistant, on the other hand, turning presently to ask the Doctor some question, looked at him with a wan smile as if he were his whole reliance and sustenance in life.

It was in vain for the Doctor in his easy chair, to try to lead the mind of Mr. Goodchild in the opposite easy chair, away from what was before him. Let Mr. Goodchild do what he would to follow the Doctor, his eyes and thoughts reverted to the Assistant. The Doctor soon perceived it, and, after falling silent, and musing in a little perplexity, said:

"Lorn!"

"My dear Doctor."

"Would you go to the Inn, and apply that lotion? You will show the best way of applying it, far better than Mr. Goodchild can."

"With pleasure."

The Assistant took his hat, and passed like a shadow to the door.

"Lorn!" said the Doctor, calling after him.

He returned.

"Mr. Goodchild will keep me company till you come home. Don't hurry. Excuse my calling you back."

"It is not," said the Assistant, with his former smile, "the first time you have called me back, dear Doctor." With those words he went away.

"Mr. Goodchild," said Doctor Speddie, in a low voice, and with his former troubled expression of face,

"I have seen that your attention has been concentrated on my friend."

"He fascinates me. I must apologise to you, but he has quite bewildered and mastered me."

"I find that a lonely existence and a long secret," said the Doctor, drawing his chair a little nearer to Mr. Goodchild's, "become in the course of time very heavy. I will tell you something. You may make what use you will of it, under fictitious names. I know I may trust you. I am the more inclined to confidence to-night, through having been unexpectedly led back, by the current of our conversation at the Inn, to scenes in my early life. Will you please to draw a little nearer?"

Mr. Goodchild drew a little nearer, and the Doctor went on thus: speaking, for the most part, in so cautious a voice, that the wind, though it was far from high, occasionally got the better of him.

When this present nineteenth century was younger by a good many years than it is now, a certain friend of mine, named Arthur Holliday, happened to arrive in the town of Doncaster, exactly in the middle of the race-week, or, in other words, in the middle of the month of September. He was one of those reckless, rattle-pated, open-hearted, and open-mouthed young gentlemen, who possess the gift of familiarity in its highest perfection, and who scramble carelessly along the journey of life making friends, as the phrase is, wherever they go. His father was a rich manufacturer, and had bought landed property enough in one of the midland counties to make all the born squires in his neighbourhood thoroughly envious of him. Arthur was his only son, possessor in prospect of the great estate and the great

business after his father's death; well supplied with money, and not too rigidly looked after, during his father's lifetime. Report, or scandal, whichever you please, said that the old gentleman had been rather wild in his youthful days, and that, unlike most parents, he was not disposed to be violently indignant when he found that his son took after him. This may be true or not. I myself only knew the elder Mr. Holliday when he was getting on in years; and then he was as quiet and as respectable a gentleman as ever I met with.

Well, one September, as I told you, young Arthur comes to Doncaster, having decided all of a sudden, in his hare-brained way, that he would go to the races. He did not reach the town till towards the close of the evening, and he went at once to see about his dinner and bed at the principal hotel. Dinner they were ready enough to give him; but as for a bed, they laughed when he mentioned it. In the race-week at Doncaster, it is no uncommon thing for visitors who have not bespoken apartments, to pass the night in their carriages at the inn doors. As for the lower sort of strangers, I myself have often seen them, at that full time, sleeping out on the doorsteps for want of a covered place to creep under. Rich as he was, Arthur's chance of getting a night's lodging (seeing that he had not written beforehand to secure one) was more than doubtful. He tried the second hotel, and the third hotel, and two of the inferior inns after that; and was met everywhere by the same form of answer. No accommodation for the night of any sort was left. All the bright golden sovereigns in his pocket would not buy him a bed at Doncaster in the race-week.

To a young fellow of Arthur's temperament, the

novelty of being turned away into the street, like a penniless vagabond, at every house where he asked for a lodging, presented itself in the light of a new and highly amusing piece of experience. He went on, with carpet-bag in his hand, applying for a bed at every place of entertainment for travellers that he could find in Doncaster, until he wandered into the outskirts of the town. By this time, the last glimmer of twilight had faded out, the moon was rising dimly in a mist, the wind was getting cold, the clouds were gathering heavily, and there was every prospect that it was soon going to rain.

The look of the night had rather a lowering effect on young Holliday's good spirits. He began to contemplate the houseless situation in which he was placed, from the serious rather than the humorous point of view; and he looked about him, for another public-house to enquire at, with something very like downright anxiety in his mind on the subject of a lodging for the night. The suburban part of the town towards which he had now strayed was hardly lighted at all, and he could see nothing of the houses as he passed them, except that they got progressively smaller and dirtier, the farther he went. Down the winding road before him shone the dull gleam of an oil lamp, the one faint, lonely light that struggled ineffectually with the foggy darkness all round him. He resolved to go on as far as this lamp, and then, if it showed him nothing in the shape of an Inn, to return to the central part of the town and to try if he could not at least secure a chair to sit down on, through the night, at one of the principal Hotels.

As he got near the lamp, he heard voices; and, walking close under it, found that it lighted the entrance

to a narrow court, on the wall of which was painted a long hand in faded flesh-colour, pointing, with a lean forefinger, to this inscription: —

THE TWO ROBINS.

Arthur turned into the court without hesitation, to see what The Two Robins could do for him. Four or five men were standing together round the door of the house which was at the bottom of the court, facing the entrance for the street. The men were all listening to one other man, better dressed than the rest, who was telling his audience something, in a low voice, in which they were apparently very much interested.

On entering the passage, Arthur was passed by a stranger with a knapsack in his hand, who was evidently leaving the house.

"No," said the traveller with the knapsack, turning round and addressing himself cheerfully to a fat, sly-looking, bald-headed man, with a dirty white apron on, who had followed him down the passage. "No, Mr. Landlord, I am not easily scared by trifles; but, I don't mind confessing that I can't quite stand *that*."

It occurred to young Holliday, the moment he heard these words, that the stranger had been asked an exorbitant price for a bed at The Two Robins; and that he was unable or unwilling to pay it. The moment his back was turned, Arthur, comfortably conscious of his own well-filled pockets, addressed himself in a great hurry, for fear any other benighted traveller should slip in and forestall him, to the sly-looking landlord with the dirty apron and the bald head.

"If you have got a bed to let," he said, "and if that gentleman who has just gone out won't pay you your price for it, I will."

The sly landlord looked hard at Arthur.

"Will you, sir?" he asked, in a meditative, doubtful way.

"Name your price," said young Holliday, thinking that the landlord's hesitation sprang from some boorish distrust of him. "Name your price, and I'll give you the money at once, if you like?"

"Are you game for five shillings?" enquired the landlord, rubbing his stubbly double chin, and looking up thoughtfully at the ceiling above him.

Arthur nearly laughed in the man's face; but thinking it prudent to control himself, offered the five shillings as seriously as he could. The sly landlord held out his hand, then suddenly drew it back again.

"You're acting all fair and above-board by me," he said: "and, before I take your money, I'll do the same by you. Look here, this is how it stands. You can have a bed all to yourself for five shillings; but you can't have more than a half-share of the room it stands in. Do you see what I mean, young gentleman?"

"Of course I do," returned Arthur, a little irritably. "You mean that it is a doublebedded room and that one of the beds is occupied?"

The landlord nodded his head, and rubbed his double chin harder than ever. Arthur hesitated, and mechanically moved back a step or two towards the door. The idea of sleeping in the same room with a total stranger, did not present an attractive prospect to him. He felt more than half-inclined to drop his five shillings into his pocket, and to go out into the street once more.

"Is it yes, or no?" asked the landlord. "Settle it as quick as you can, because there's lots of people wanting a bed at Doncaster to-night, besides you."

Arthur looked towards the court, and heard the rain falling heavily in the street outside. He thought he would ask a question or two before he rashly decided on leaving the shelter of The Two Robins.

"What sort of a man is it who has got the other bed?" he inquired. "Is he a gentleman? I mean, is he a quiet, well-behaved person?"

"The quietest man I ever came across," said the landlord, rubbing his fat hands stealthily one over the other. "As sober as a judge, and as regular as clock-work in his habits. It hasn't struck nine, not ten minutes ago, and he's in his bed already. I don't know whether that comes up to your notion of a quiet man: it goes a long way a-head of mine, I can tell you."

"Is he asleep, do you think?" asked Arthur.

"I know he's asleep," returned the landlord. "And what's more, he's gone off so fast, that I'll warrant you don't wake him. This way, sir," said the landlord, speaking over young Holliday's shoulder, as if he was addressing some new guest who was approaching the house.

"Here you are," said Arthur, determined to be beforehand with the stranger, whoever he might be. "I'll take the bed." And he handed the five shillings to the landlord, who nodded, dropped the money carelessly into his waistcoat-pocket, and lighted a candle.

"Come up and see the room," said the host of The Two Robins, leading the way to the staircase quite briskly, considering how fat he was.

They mounted to the second-floor of the house. The landlord half opened a door, fronting the landing, then stopped, and turned round to Arthur.

"It's a fair bargain, mind, on my side as well as on

yours," he said. "You give me five shillings, I give you in return a clean, comfortable bed; and I warrant, beforehand, that you won't be interfered with, or annoyed in any way, by the man who sleeps in the same room with you." Saying those words, he looked hard, for a moment, in young Holliday's face, and then led the way into the room.

It was larger and cleaner than Arthur had expected it would be. The two beds stood parallel with each other — a space of about six feet intervening between them. They were both of the same medium size, and both had the same plain white curtains, made to draw, if necessary, and round them. The occupied bed was the bed nearest the window. The curtains were all drawn round this, except the half curtain at the bottom, on the side of the bed farthest from the window. Arthur saw the feet of the sleeping man raising the scanty clothes into a sharp little eminence, as if he was lying flat on his back. He took the candle, and advanced softly to draw the curtain — stopped half way, and listened for a moment — then turned to the landlord.

"He is a very quiet sleeper," said Arthur.

"Yes," said the landlord, "very quiet."

Young Holliday advanced with the candle, and looked in at the man cautiously.

"How pale he is!" said Arthur.

"Yes," returned the landlord, "pale enough, isn't he?"

Arthur looked closer at the man. The bed-clothes were drawn up to his chin, and they lay perfectly still over the region of his chest. Surprised and vaguely startled, as he noticed this, Arthur stooped down closer over the stranger; looked at his ashy, parted lips; listened

breathlessly for an instant; looked again at the strangely still face, and the motionless lips and chest; and turned round suddenly on the landlord, with his own cheeks as pale for the moment as the hollow cheeks of the man on the bed.

"Come here," he whispered, under his breath. "Come here, for God's sake! The man's not asleep — he is dead!"

"You have found that out sooner than I thought you would," said the landlord composedly, "Yes, he's dead, sure enough. He died at five o'clock to-day."

"How did he die? Who is he?" asked Arthur, staggered, for the moment, by the audacious coolness of the answer.

"As to who is he," rejoined the landlord, "I know no more about him than you do. There are his books and letters and things, all sealed up in that brown paper parcel, for the Coroner's inquest to open to-morrow or next day. He's been here a week, paying his way fairly enough, and stopping in-doors, for the most part, as if he was ailing. My girl brought him up his tea at five to-day; and as he was pouring of it out, he fell down in a faint, or a fit, or a compound of both, for anything I know. We could not bring him to — and I said he was dead. And the doctor couldn't bring him to — and the doctor said he was dead. And there he is. And the Coroner's inquest's coming as soon as it can. And that's as much as I know about it."

Arthur held the candle close to the man's lips. The flame still burnt straight up, as steadily as ever. There was a moment of silence; and the rain pattered drearily through it against the panes of the window.

"If you haven't got nothing more to say to me,"

continued the landlord, "I suppose I may go. You don't expect your five shillings back, do you? There's the bed I promised you, clean and comfortable. There's the man I warranted not to disturb you, quiet in this world for ever. If you're frightened to stop alone with him, that's not my look out. I've kept my part of the bargain, and I mean to keep the money. I'm not Yorkshire, myself, young gentleman; but I've lived long enough in these parts to have my wits sharpened; and I shouldn't wonder if you found out the way to brighten up yours, next time you come among us." With these words, the landlord turned towards the door, and laughed to himself softly, in high satisfaction at his own sharpness.

Startled and shocked as he was, Arthur had by this time sufficiently recovered himself to feel indignant at the trick that had been played on him, and at the insolent manner in which the landlord exulted in it.

"Don't laugh," he said sharply, "till you are quite sure you have got the laugh against me. You shan't have the five shillings for nothing, my man. I'll keep the bed."

"Will you?" said the landlord. "Then I wish you a good night's rest." With that brief farewell, he went out, and shut the door after him.

A good night's rest! The words had hardly been spoken, the door had hardly been closed, before Arthur half-repent-ed the hasty words that had just escaped him. Though not naturally over-sensitive, and not wanting in courage of the moral as well as the physical sort, the presence of the dead man had an instantaneously chilling effect on his mind when he found himself alone in the room — alone, and bound by his own rash words to stay there till the next morning. An older man would

have thought nothing of those words, and would have acted, without reference to them, as his calmer sense suggested. But Arthur was too young to treat the ridicule, even of his inferiors, with contempt — too young not to fear the momentary humiliation of falsifying his own foolish boast, more than he feared the trial of watching out the long night in the same chamber with the dead.

“It is but a few hours,” he thought to himself, “and I can get away the first thing in the morning.”

He was looking towards the occupied bed as that idea passed through his mind, and the sharp angular eminence made in the clothes by the dead man’s upturned feet again caught his eye. He advanced and drew the curtains, purposely abstaining, as he did so, from looking at the face of the corpse, lest he might unnerve himself at the outset by fastening some ghastly impression of it on his mind. He drew the curtain very gently, and sighed involuntarily as he closed it. “Poor fellow,” he said, almost as sadly as if he had known the man. “Ah, poor fellow!”

He went next to the window. The night was black, and he could see nothing from it. The rain still pattered heavily against the glass. He inferred, from hearing it, that the window was at the back of the house; remembering that the front was sheltered from the weather by the court and the buildings over it.

While he was still standing at the window — for even the dreary rain was a relief, because of the sound it made; a relief, also, because it moved, and had some faint suggestion, in consequence, of life and companionship in it — while he was standing at the window, and looking vacantly into the black darkness outside, he

heard a distant churchclock strike ten. Only ten! How was he to pass the time till the house was astir the next morning!

Under any other circumstances, he would have gone down to the public-house parlour, would have called for his grog, and would have laughed and talked with the company assembled as familiarly as if he had known them all his life. But the very thought of whiling away the time in this manner was now distasteful to him. The new situation in which he was placed seemed to have altered him to himself already. Thus far, his life had been the common, trifling, prosaic, surface-life of a prosperous young man, with no troubles to conquer, and no trials to face. He had lost no relation whom he loved, no friend whom he treasured. Till this night, what share he had of the immortal inheritance that is divided amongst us all, had lain dormant within him. Till this night, Death and he had not once met, even in thought.

He took a few turns up and down the room — then stopped. The noise made by his boots on the poorly carpeted floor, jarred on his ear. He hesitated a little, and ended by taking the boots off, and walking backwards and forwards noiselessly. All desire to sleep or to rest had left him. The bare thought of lying down on the unoccupied bed instantly drew the picture on his mind of a dreadful mimicry of the position of the dead man. Who was he? What was the story of his past life? Poor he must have been, or he would not have stopped at such a place as The Two Robins Inn — and weakened, probably, by long illness, or he could hardly have died in the manner which the landlord had described. Poor, ill, lonely — dead in a strange place;

dead, with nobody but a stranger to pity him. A sad story: truly, on the mere face of it, a very sad story.

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he had stopped insensibly at the window, close to which stood the foot of the bed with the closed curtains. At first he looked at it absently; then he became conscious that his eyes were fixed on it; and then, a perverse desire took possession of him to do the very thing which he had resolved not to do, up to this time — to look at the dead man.

He stretched out his hand towards the curtains; but checked himself in the very act of undrawing them, turned his back sharply on the bed, and walked towards the chimney-piece, to see what things were placed on it, and to try if he could keep the dead man out of his mind in that way.

There was a pewter inkstand on the chimney-piece, with some mildewed remains of ink in the bottle. There were two coarse china ornaments of the commonest kind; and there was a square of embossed card, dirty and fly-blown, with a collection of wretched riddles printed on it, in all sorts of zig-zag directions, and in variously coloured inks. He took the card, and went away, to read it, to the table on which the candle was placed; sitting down, with his back resolutely turned to the curtained bed.

He read the first riddle, the second, the third, all in one corner of the card — then turned it round impatiently to look at another. Before he could begin reading the riddles printed here, the sound of the churchclock stopped him. Eleven. He had got through an hour of the time, in the room with the dead man.

Once more he looked at the card. It was not easy to make out the letters printed on it, in consequence of the light which the landlord had left him — a common tallow candle, furnished with a pair of heavy old-fashioned steel snuffers. Up to this time, his mind had been too much occupied to think of the light. He had left the wick of the candle unsnuffed, till it had risen higher than the flame, and had burnt into an odd pent-house shape at the top, from which morsels of the charred cotton fell off, from time to time, in little flakes. He took up the snuffers now, and trimmed the wick. The light brightened directly, and the room became less dismal.

Again he turned to the riddles; reading them doggedly and resolutely, now in one corner of the card, now in another. All his efforts, however, could not fix his attention on them. He pursued his occupation mechanically, deriving no sort of impression from what he was reading. It was as if a shadow from the curtained bed had got between his mind and the gaily printed letters — a shadow that nothing could dispel. At last, he gave up the struggle, and threw the card from him impatiently, and took to walking softly up and down the room again.

The dead man, the dead man, the *hidden* dead man on the bed! There was the one persistent idea still haunting him. Hidden! Was it only the body being there, or was it the body being there, concealed, that was preying on his mind? He stopped at the window, with that doubt in him; once more listening to the pattering rain, once more looking out into the black darkness.

Still the dead man! The darkness forced his mind

back upon itself, and set his memory at work, reviving, with a painfully-vivid distinctness the momentary impression it had received from his first sight of the corpse. Before long the face seemed to be hovering out in the middle of the darkness, confronting him through the window, with the paleness whiter, with the dreadful dull line of light between the imperfectly-closed eyelids broader than he had seen it — with the parted lips slowly dropping farther and farther away from each other — with the features growing larger and moving closer, till they seemed to fill the window and to silence the rain, and to shut out the night.

The sound of a voice, shouting below stairs, woke him suddenly from the dream of his own distempered fancy. He recognised it as the voice of the landlord. "Shut up at twelve, Ben," he heard it say. "I'm off to bed."

He wiped away the damp that had gathered on his forehead, reasoned with himself for a little while, and resolved to shake his mind free of the ghastly counterfeit which still clung to it, by forcing himself to confront, if it was only for a moment, the solemn reality. Without allowing himself an instant to hesitate, he parted the curtains at the foot of the bed, and looked through.

There was the sad, peaceful, white face, with the awful mystery of stillness on it, laid back upon the pillow. No stir, no change there! He only looked at it for a moment before he closed the curtains again — but that moment steadied him, calmed him, restored him — mind and body — to himself.

He returned to his old occupation of walking up and down the room; persevering in it, this time, till the clock struck again. Twelve.

As the sound of the clock-bell died away, it was succeeded by the confused noise, down stairs, of the drinkers in the tap-room leaving the house. The next sound, after an interval of silence, was caused by the barring of the door, and the closing of the shutters, at the back of the Inn. Then the silence followed again, and was disturbed no more.

He was alone now — absolutely, utterly, alone with the dead man, till the next morning.

The wick of the candle wanted trimming again. He took up the snuffers — but paused suddenly on the very point of using them, and looked attentively at the candle — then back, over his shoulder, at the curtained bed — then again at the candle. It had been lighted, for the first time, to show him the way up stairs, and three parts of it, at least, were already consumed. In another hour it would be burnt out. In another hour — unless he called at once to the man who had shut up the Inn, for a fresh candle — he would be left in the dark.

Strongly as his mind had been affected since he had entered the room, his unreasonable dread of encountering ridicule, and of exposing his courage to suspicion, had not altogether lost its influence over him, even yet. He lingered irresolutely by the table, waiting till he could prevail on himself to open the door, and call, from the landing, to the man who had shut up the Inn. In his present hesitating frame of mind, it was a kind of relief to gain a few moments only by engaging in the trifling occupation of snuffing the candle. His hand trembled a little, and the snuffers were heavy and awkward to use. When he closed them on the wick, he closed them a

hair's breadth too low. In an instant the candle was out, and the room was plunged in pitch darkness.

The one impression which the absence of light immediately produced on his mind, was distrust of the curtained bed — distrust which shaped itself into no distinct idea, but which was powerful enough, in its very vagueness, to bind him down to his chair, to make his heart beat fast, and to set him listening intently. No sound stirred in the room but the familiar sound of the rain against the window, louder and sharper now than he had heard it yet.

Still the vague distrust, the inexpressible dread possessed him, and kept him in his chair. He had put his carpet-bag on the table, when he first entered the room; and he now took the key from his pocket, reached out his hand softly, opened the bag, and groped in it for his travelling writing-case, in which he knew that there was a small store of matches. When he had got one of the matches, he waited before he struck it on the coarse wooden table, and listened intently again, without knowing why. Still there was no sound in the room but the steady, ceaseless, rattling sound of the rain.

He lighted the candle again, without another moment of delay; and, on the instant of its burning up, the first object in the room that his eyes sought for was the curtained bed.

Just before the light had been put out, he had looked in that direction, and had seen no change, no disarrangement of any sort, in the folds of the closely-drawn curtains.

When he looked at the bed, now, he saw, hanging over the side of it, a long white hand.

It lay perfectly motionless, midway on the side of the bed, where the curtain at the head and the curtain at the foot met. Nothing more was visible. The clinging curtains hid everything but the long white hand.

He stood looking at it unable to stir, unable to call out; feeling nothing, knowing nothing; every faculty he possessed gathered up and lost in the one seeing faculty. How long that first panic held him he never could tell afterwards. It might have been only for a moment; it might have been for many minutes together. How he got to the bed — whether he ran to it headlong, or whether he approached it slowly — how he wrought himself up to unclosethe curtains and look in, he never has remembered, and never will remember to his dying day. It is enough that he did go to the bed, and that he did look inside the curtains.

The man had moved. One of his arms was outside the clothes; his face was turned a little on the pillow; his eyelids were wide open. Changed as to position, and as to one of the features, the face was otherwise, fearfully and wonderfully unaltered. The dead paleness and the dead quiet were on it still.

One glance showed Arthur this — one glance, before he flew breathlessly to the door, and alarmed the house.

The man whom the landlord called "Ben," was the first to appear on the stairs. In three words, Arthur told him what had happened, and sent him for the nearest doctor.

I, who tell you this story, was then staying with a medical friend of mine, in practice at Doncaster, taking care of his patients for him, during his absence in Lon-

don; and I, for the time being, was the nearest doctor. They had sent for me from the Inn, when the stranger was taken ill in the afternoon; but I was not at home, and medical assistance was sought for elsewhere. When the man from The Two Robins rang the night-bell, I was just thinking of going to bed. Naturally enough, I did not believe a word of his story about "a dead man who had come to life again." However, I put on my hat, armed myself with one or two bottles of restorative medicine, and ran to the Inn, expecting to find nothing more remarkable, when I got there, than a patient in a fit.

My surprise at finding that the man had spoken the literal truth was almost, if not quite, equalled by my astonishment at finding myself face to face with Arthur Holliday as soon as I entered the bedroom. It was no time then for giving or seeking explanations. We just shook hands amazedly; and then I ordered everybody but Arthur out of the room, and hurried to the man on the bed.

The kitchen fire had not been long out. There was plenty of hot water in the boiler, and plenty of flannel to be had. With these, with my medicines, and with such help as Arthur could render under my direction, I dragged the man, literally, out of the jaws of death. In less than an hour from the time when I had been called in, he was alive and talking in the bed on which he had been laid out to wait for the Coroner's inquest.

You will naturally ask me, what had been the matter with him; and I might treat you, in reply, to a long theory, plentifully sprinkled with, what the children call, hard words. I prefer telling you that, in this case, cause

and effect could not be satisfactorily joined together by any theory whatever. There are mysteries in life, and the conditions of it, which human science has not fathomed yet; and I candidly confess to you, that, in bringing that man back to existence, I was, morally speaking, groping hap-hazard in the dark. I know (from the testimony of the doctor who attended him in the afternoon) that the vital machinery, so far as its action is appreciable by our senses, had, in this case, unquestionably stopped; and I am equally certain (seeing that I recovered him) that the vital principle was not extinct. When I add, that he had suffered from a long and complicated illness, and that his whole nervous system was utterly deranged, I have told you all I really know of the physical condition of my dead-alive patient at the Two Robins Inn.

When he "came to," as the phrase goes, he was a startling object to look at, with his colourless face, his sunken cheeks, his wild black eyes, and his long black hair. The first question he asked me about himself, when he could speak, made me suspect that I had been called in to a man in my own profession. I mentioned to him my surmise; and he told me that I was right.

He said he had come last from Paris, where he had been attached to a hospital. That he had lately returned to England, on his way to Edinburgh, to continue his studies; that he had been taken ill on the journey; and that he had stopped to rest and recover himself at Doncaster. He did not add a word about his name, or who he was: and, of course, I did not question him on the subject. All I inquired, when he ceased speaking, was what branch of the profession he intended to follow.

"Any branch," he said bitterly, "which will put bread into the mouth of a poor man."

At this, Arthur, who had been hitherto watching him in silent curiosity, burst out impetuously in his usual good-humoured way: —

"My dear fellow!" (everybody was "my dear fellow" with Arthur) "now you have come to life again, don't begin by being down-hearted about your prospects. I'll answer for it, I can help you to some capital thing in the medical line — or, if I can't, I know my father can."

The medical student looked at him steadily.

"Thank you," he said coldly. Then added, "May I ask who your father is?"

"He's well enough known all about this part of the country," replied Arthur. "He is a great manufacturer, and his name is Holliday."

My hand was on the man's wrist during this brief conversation. The instant the name of Holliday was pronounced I felt the pulse under my fingers flutter, stop, go on suddenly with a bound, and beat afterwards, for a minute or two, at the fever rate.

"How did you come here?" asked the stranger, quickly, excitably, passionately almost.

Arthur related briefly what had happened from the time of his first taking the bed at the inn.

"I am indebted to Mr. Holliday's son then for the help that has saved my life," said the medical student, speaking to himself, with a singular sarcasm in his voice. "Come here!"

He held out, as he spoke, his long, white, bony right hand.

"With all my heart," said Arthur, taking the hand

cordially. "I may confess it now," he continued, laughing, "Upon my honour, you almost frightened me out of my wits."

The stranger did not seem to listen. His wild black eyes were fixed with a look of eager interest on Arthur's face, and his long bony fingers kept tight hold of Arthur's hand. Young Holliday, on his side, returned the gaze, amazed and puzzled by the medical student's odd language and manners. The two faces were close together; I looked at them; and, to my amazement, I was suddenly impressed by the sense of a likeness between them — not in features, or complexion, but solely in expression. It must have been a strong likeness, or I should certainly not have found it out, for I am naturally slow at detecting resemblances between faces.

"You have saved my life," said the strange man, still looking hard in Arthur's face, still holding tightly by his hand. "If you had been my own brother, you could not have done more for me than that."

He laid a singularly strong emphasis on those three words "my own brother," and a change passed over his face as he pronounced them, — a change that no language of mine is competent to describe.

"I hope I have not done being of service to you yet," said Arthur. "I'll speak to my father, as soon as I get home."

"You seem to be fond and proud of your father," said the medical student. "I suppose, in return, he is fond and proud of you?"

"Of course, he is!" answered Arthur, laughing. "Is there anything wonderful in that? Isn't *your* father fond —"

The stranger suddenly dropped young Holliday's hand, and turned his face away.

"I beg your pardon," said Arthur. "I hope I have not unintentionally pained you. I hope you have not lost your father?"

"I can't well lose what I have never had," retorted the medical student, with a harsh mocking laugh.

"What you have never had!"

The strange man suddenly caught Arthur's hand again, suddenly looked once more hard in his face.

"Yes," he said, with a repetition of the bitter laugh. "You have brought a poor devil back into the world, who has no business there. Do I astonish you? Well! I have a fancy of my own for telling you what men in my situation generally keep a secret. I have no name and no father. The merciful law of Society tells me I am Nobody's Son! Ask your father if he will be my father too, and help me on in life with the family name."

Arthur looked at me, more puzzled than ever. I signed to him to say nothing, and then laid my fingers again on the man's wrist. No! In spite of the extraordinary speech that he had just made, he was not, as I had been disposed to suspect, beginning to get light-headed. His pulse, by this time, had fallen back to a quiet, slow beat, and his skin was moist and cool. Not a symptom of fever or agitation about him.

Finding that neither of us answered him, he turned to me, and began talking of the extraordinary nature of his case, and asking my advice about the future course of medical treatment to which he ought to subject himself. I said the matter required careful thinking over, and suggested that I should submit certain prescriptions to him the next morning. He told me to write them at

once, as he would, most likely, be leaving Doncaster, in the morning, before I was up. It was quite useless to represent to him the folly and danger of such a proceeding as this. He heard me politely and patiently, but held to his resolution, without offering any reasons or any explanations, and repeated to me, that if I wished to give him a chance of seeing my prescription, I must write it at once. Hearing this, Arthur volunteered the loan of a travelling writing-case, which, he said, he had with him; and, bringing it to the bed, shook the notepaper out of the pocket of the case forthwith in his usual careless way. With the paper, there fell out on the counterpane of the bed a small packet of sticking-plaster, and a little water-colour drawing of a landscape.

The medical student took up the drawing and looked at it. His eye fell on some initials neatly written, in cypher, in one corner. He started, and trembled; his pale face grew whiter than ever; his wild black eyes turned on Arthur, and looked through and through him.

"A pretty drawing," he said, in a remarkably quiet tone of voice.

"Ah! and done by such a pretty girl," said Arthur. "Oh, such a pretty girl! I wish it was not a landscape — I wish it was a portrait of her!"

"You admire her very much?"

Arthur, half in jest, half in earnest, kissed his hand for answer.

"Love at first sight!" he said, putting the drawing away again. "But the course of it doesn't run smooth. It's the old story. She's monopolised as usual. Trammelled by a rash engagement to some poor man who is

never likely to get money enough to marry her. It was lucky I heard of it in time, or I should certainly have risked a declaration when she gave me that drawing. Here, doctor! Here is pen, ink, and paper all ready for you."

"When she gave you that drawing? Gave it. Gave it." He repeated the words slowly to himself, and suddenly closed his eyes. A momentary distortion passed across his face, and I saw one of his hands clutch up the bedclothes and squeeze them hard. I thought he was going to be ill again, and begged that there might be no more talking. He opened his eyes when I spoke, fixed them once more searchingly on Arthur, and said, slowly and distinctly, "You like her, and she likes you. The poor man may die out of your way. Who can tell that she may not give you herself as well as her drawing, after all?"

Before young Holliday could answer, he turned to me, and said in a whisper, "Now for the prescription." From that time, though he spoke to Arthur again, he never looked at him more.

When I had written the prescription, he examined it, approved of it, and then astonished us both by abruptly wishing us good night. I offered to sit up with him, and he shook his head. Arthur offered to sit up with him, and he said, shortly, with his face turned away, "No." I insisted on having somebody left to watch him. He gave way when he found I was determined, and said he would accept the services of the waiter at the inn.

"Thank you, both," he said, as we rose to go. "I have one last favour to ask — not of you, doctor, for I leave you to exercise your professional discretion — but

of Mr. Holliday." His eyes, while he spoke, still rested steadily on me, and never once turned towards Arthur. "I beg that Mr. Holliday will not mention to any one — least of all to his father — the events that have occurred, and the words that have passed, in this room. I entreat him to bury me in his memory, as, but for him, I might have been buried in my grave. I cannot give my reasons for making this strange request. I can only implore him to grant it."

His voice faltered for the first time, and he hid his face on the pillow. Arthur, completely bewildered, gave the required pledge. I took young Holliday away with me, immediately afterwards, to the house of my friend; determining to go back to the inn, and to see the medical student again before he had left in the morning.

I returned to the inn at eight o'clock, purposely abstaining from waking Arthur, who was sleeping off the past night's excitement on one of my friend's sofas. A suspicion had occurred to me, as soon as I was alone in my bedroom, which made me resolve that Holliday and the stranger whose life he had saved should not meet again, if I could prevent it. I have already alluded to certain reports, or scandals, which I knew of, relating to the early life of Arthur's father. While I was thinking, in my bed, of what had passed at the Inn — of the change in the student's pulse when he heard the name of Holliday; of the resemblance of expression that I had discovered between his face and Arthur's; of the emphasis he had laid on those three words, "my own brother;" and of his incomprehensible acknowledgment of his own illegitimacy — while I was thinking of these things, the reports I have mentioned suddenly flew into my mind, and linked themselves fast to the chain of my

previous reflections. Something within me whispered, "It is best that those two young men should not meet again." I felt it before I slept; I felt it when I woke; and I went, as I told you, alone to the Inn the next morning.

I had missed my only opportunity of seeing my nameless patient again. He had been gone nearly an hour when I inquired for him.

I have now told you everything that I know for certain, in relation to the man whom I brought back to life in the double-bedded room of the Inn at Doncaster. What I have next to add is matter for inference and surmise, and is not, strictly speaking, matter of fact.

I have to tell you, first, that the medical student turned out to be strangely and unaccountably right in assuming it as more than probable that Arthur Holliday would marry the young lady who had given him the water-colour drawing of the landscape. That marriage took place a little more than a year after the events occurred which I have just been relating. The young couple came to live in the neighbourhood in which I was then established in practice. I was present at the wedding, and was rather surprised to find that Arthur was singularly reserved with me, both before and after his marriage, on the subject of the young lady's prior engagement. He only referred to it once, when we were alone, merely telling me, on that occasion, that his wife had done all that honour and duty required of her in the matter, and that the engagement had been broken off with the full approval of her parents. I never heard more from him than this. For three years he and his wife lived together happily. At the expiration of that

time, the symptoms of a serious illness first declared themselves in Mrs. Arthur Holliday. It turned out to be a long, lingering, hopeless malady. I attended her throughout. We had been great friends when she was well, and we became more attached to each other than ever when she was ill. I had many long and interesting conversations with her in the intervals when she suffered least. The result of one of those conversations I may briefly relate, leaving you to draw any inferences from it that you please.

The interview to which I refer, occurred shortly before her death. I called one evening, as usual, and found her alone, with a look in her eyes which told me that she had been crying. She only informed me at first, that she had been depressed in spirits; but, by little and little, she became more communicative, and confessed to me that she had been looking over some old letters, which had been addressed to her, before she had seen Arthur, by a man to whom she had been engaged to be married. I asked her how the engagement came to be broken off. She replied that it had not been broken off, but that it had died out in a very mysterious way. The person to whom she was engaged — her first love, she called him — was very poor, and there was no immediate prospect of their being married. He followed my profession, and went abroad to study. They had corresponded regularly, until the time when, as she believed, he had returned to England. From that period she heard no more of him. He was of a fretful, sensitive temperament; and she feared that she might have inadvertently done or said something that offended him. However that might be, he had never written to her again; and, after waiting a year, she had married Ar-

thur. I asked when the first estrangement had begun, and found that the time at which she ceased to hear anything of her first lover exactly corresponded with the time at which I had been called in to my mysterious patient at The Two Robins Inn.

A fortnight after that conversation, she died. In course of time, Arthur married again. Of late years, he has lived principally in London, and I have seen little or nothing of him.

I have many years to pass over before I can approach to anything like a conclusion of this fragmentary narrative. And even when that later period is reached, the little that I have to say will not occupy your attention for more than a few minutes. Between six and seven years ago, the gentleman to whom I introduced you in this room, came to me, with good professional recommendations, to fill the position of my assistant. We met, not like strangers, but like friends — the only difference between us being, that I was very much surprised to see him, and that he did not appear to be at all surprised to see me. If he was my son, or my brother I believe he could not be fonder of me than he is; but he has never volunteered any confidences since he has been here, on the subject of his past life. I saw something that was familiar to me in his face when we first met; and yet it was also something that suggested the idea of change. I had a notion once that my patient at the Inn might be a natural son of Mr. Holliday's; I had another idea that he might also have been the man who was engaged to Arthur's first wife; and I have a third idea, still clinging to me, that Mr. Lorn is the only man in England who could really enlighten me, if he chose, on both those doubtful points. His hair

is not black, now, and his eyes are dimmer than the piercing eyes that I remember, but, for all that, he is very like the nameless medical student of my young days — very like him. And, sometimes, when I come home late at night, and find him asleep, and wake him, he looks, in coming to, wonderfully like the stranger at Doncaster, as he raised himself in the bed on that memorable night!

The doctor paused. Mr. Goodchild who had been following every word that fell from his lips, up to this time, leaned forward eagerly to ask a question. Before he could say a word, the latch of the door was raised, without any warning sound of footsteps in the passage outside. A long, white, bony hand appeared through the opening, gently pushing the door, which was prevented from working freely on its hinges by a fold in the carpet under it.

“That hand! Look at that hand, Doctor!” said Mr. Goodchild, touching him.

At the same moment, the doctor looked at Mr. Goodchild, and whispered to him, significantly:

“Hush! he has come back.”

CHAPTER III.

THE Cumberland Doctor's mention of Doncaster Races, inspired Mr. Francis Goodchild with the idea of going down to Doncaster to see the races. Doncaster being a good way off, and quite out of the way of the Idle Apprentices (if anything could be out of their way, who had no way), it necessarily followed that Francis perceived Doncaster in the race-week to be, of all

possible idlenesses, the particular idleness that would completely satisfy him.

Thomas, with an enforced idleness grafted on the natural and voluntary power of his disposition, was not of this mind; objecting that a man compelled to lie on his back on a floor, a sofa, a table, a line of chairs, or anything he could get to lie upon, was not in racing condition, and that he desired nothing better than to lie where he was, enjoying himself in looking at the flies on the ceiling. But, Francis Goodchild, who had been walking round his companion in a circuit of twelve miles for two days, and had begun to doubt whether it was reserved for him ever to be idle in his life, not only overpowered this objection, but even converted Thomas Idle to a scheme he formed (another idle inspiration), of conveying the said Thomas to the sea-coast, and putting his injured leg under a stream of salt-water.

Plunging into this happy conception head-foremost, Mr. Goodchild immediately referred to the county-map, and ardently discovered that the most delicious piece of sea-coast to be found within the limits of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, The Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands, all summed up together, was Allonby on the coast of Cumberland. There was the coast of Scotland opposite of Allonby, said Mr. Goodchild with enthusiasm; there was a fine Scottish mountain on that Scottish coast; there were Scottish lights to be seen shining across the glorious Channel, and at Allonby itself there was every idle luxury (no doubt), that a watering-place could offer to the heart of idle man. Moreover, said Mr. Goodchild, with his finger on the map, this exquisite retreat was approached by a coach-road, from a railway-station called Aspatria — a name, in a manner,

suggestive of the departed glories of Greece, associated with one of the most engaging and most famous of Greek women. On this point, Mr. Goodchild continued at intervals to breathe a vein of classic fancy and eloquence exceedingly irksome to Mr. Idle, until it appeared that the honest English pronunciation of that Cumberland country shortened *Aspatria* into "Spatter." After this supplementary discovery, Mr. Goodchild said no more about it.

By way of Spatter, the crippled Idle was carried, hoisted, pushed, poked, and packed, into and out of carriages, into and out of beds, into and out of tavern resting-places, until he was brought at length within sniff of the sea. And now, behold the apprentices gallantly riding into Allonby in a one-horse fly, bent upon staying in that peaceful marine valley until the turbulent Doncaster time shall come round upon the wheel, in its turn among what are in sporting registers called the "Fixtures" for the month.

"Do you see Allonby?" asked Thomas Idle.

"I don't see it yet," said Francis, looking out of window.

"It must be there," said Thomas Idle.

"I don't see it," returned Francis.

"It must be there," repeated Thomas Idle, fretfully.

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed Francis, drawing in his head, "I suppose this is it!"

"A watering-place," retorted Thomas Idle, with the pardonable sharpness of an invalid, "can't be five gentlemen in straw-hats, on a form on one side of a door, and four ladies in hats and falls, on a form on another side of a door, and three geese in a dirty little brook before them, and a boy's legs hanging over a bridge

(with a boy's body I suppose on the other side of the parapet), and a donkey running away. What are you talking about?"

"Allonby, gentlemen," said the most comfortable of landladies, as she opened one door of the carriage; "Allonby, gentlemen," said the most attentive of landlords, as he opened the other.

Thomas Idle yielded his arm to the ready Goodchild, and descended from the vehicle. Thomas, now just able to grope his way along, in a doubled-up condition, with the aid of two thick sticks, was no bad embodiment of Commodore Trunnion, or of one of those many gallant Admirals of the stage, who have all ample fortunes, gout, thick-sticks, tempers, wards, and nephews. With this distinguished naval appearance upon him, Thomas made a crab-like progress up a clean little bulk-headed staircase, into a clean little bulk-headed room, where he slowly deposited himself on a sofa, with a stick on either hand of him, looking exceedingly grim.

"Francis," said Thomas Idle, "what do you think of this place?"

"I think," returned Mr. Goodchild, in a glowing way, "it is everything we expected."

"Hah!" said Thomas Idle.

"There is the sea," cried Mr. Goodchild, pointing out of window; "and here," pointing to the lunch on the table, "are shrimps. Let us —" here Mr. Goodchild looked out of window, as if in search of something, and looked in again, — "let us eat 'em."

The shrimps eaten and the dinner ordered, Mr. Goodchild went out to survey the watering-place. As Chorus of the Drama, without whom Thomas could make nothing

of the scenery, he by-and-bye returned, to have the following report screwed out of him.

In brief, it was the most delightful place ever seen.

"But," Thomas Idle asked, "where is it?"

"It's what you may call generally up and down the beach, here and there," said Mr. Goodchild, with a twist of his hand.

"Proceed," said Thomas Idle.

It was, Mr. Goodchild went on to say, in cross-examination, what you might call a primitive place. Large? No, it was not large. Who ever expected it would be large? Shape? What a question to ask! No shape. What sort of a street? Why, no street. Shops? Yes, of course (quite indignant). How many? Who ever went into a place to count the shops? Ever so many. Six? Perhaps. A library? Why, of course! (indignant again). Good collection of books? Most likely — couldn't say — had seen nothing in it but a pair of scales. Any reading-room? Of course, there was a reading-room. Where? Where! why, over there. Where was over there? Why, *there!* Let Mr. Idle carry his eye to that bit of waste-ground above high water-mark, where the rank grass and loose stones were most in a litter; and he would see a sort of a long ruinous brick loft, next door to a ruinous brick outhouse, which loft had a ladder outside, to get up by. That was the reading-room, and if Mr. Idle didn't like the idea of a weaver's shuttle throbbing under a reading-room, that was his look out. *He* was not to dictate, Mr. Goodchild supposed (indignant again), to the company.

"By-the-bye," Thomas Idle observed; "the company?"

Well! (Mr. Goodchild went on to report) very nice company. Where were they? Why, there they were.

Mr. Idle could see the tops of their hats, he supposed. What? Those nine straw hats again, five gentlemen's and four ladies'? Yes, to be sure. Mr. Goodchild hoped the company were not to be expected to wear helmets, to please Mr. Idle.

Beginning to recover his temper at about this point, Mr. Goodchild voluntarily reported that if you wanted to be primitive, you could be primitive here, and that if you wanted to be idle, you could be idle here. In the course of some days, he added, that there were three fishing-boats, but no rigging, and that there were plenty of fishermen who never fished. That they got their living entirely by looking at the ocean. What nourishment they looked out of it to support their strength, he couldn't say; but, he supposed it was some sort of Iodine. The place was full of their children, who were always upside down on the public buildings (two small bridges over the brook), and always hurting themselves or one another, so that their wailings made more continual noise in the air than could have been got in a busy place. The houses people lodged in, were nowhere in particular, and were in capital accordance with the beach; being all more or less cracked and damaged as its shells were, and all empty — as its shells were. Among them, was an edifice of destitute appearance, with a number of wall-eyed windows in it, looking desperately out to Scotland as if for help, which said it was a Bazaar (and it ought to know), and where you might buy anything you wanted — supposing what you wanted, was a little camp-stool or a child's wheelbarrow. The brook crawled or stopped between the houses and the sea, and the donkey was always running away, and when he got into the brook he was pelted out

with stones, which never hit him, and which always hit some of the children who were upside down on the public buildings, and made their lamentations louder. This donkey was the public excitement of Allonby, and was probably supported at the public expense.

The foregoing descriptions, delivered in separate items, on separate days of adventurous discovery, Mr. Goodchild severally wound up, by looking out of window, looking in again, and saying, "But there is the sea, and here are the shrimps — let us eat 'em."

There were fine sunsets at Allonby when the low flat beach, with its pools of water and its dry patches, changed into long bars of silver and gold in various states of burnishing, and there were fine views — on fine days — of the Scottish coast. But, when it rained at Allonby, Allonby thrown back upon its ragged self, became a kind of place which the donkey seemed to have found out, and to have his highly sagacious reasons for wishing to bolt from. Thomas Idle observed, too, that Mr. Goodchild, with a noble show of disinterestedness, became every day more ready to walk to Maryport and back, for letters; and suspicions began to harbour in the mind of Thomas, that his friend deceived him, and that Maryport was a preferable place.

Therefore, Thomas said to Francis on a day when they had looked at the sea and eaten the shrimps, "My mind misgives me, Goodchild, that you go to Maryport, like the boy in the story-book, to ask *it* to be idle with you."

"Judge, then," returned Francis, adopting the style of the story-book, "with what success. I go to a region which is a bit of water-side Bristol, with a slice of Wapping, a seasoning of Wolverhampton, and a garnish

of Portsmouth, and I say, 'Will *you* come and be idle with me?' And it answers, 'No; for I am a great deal too vaporous, and a great deal too rusty, and a great deal too muddy, and a great deal too dirty altogether; and I have ships to load, and pitch and tar to boil, and iron to hammer, and steam to get up, and smoke to make, and stone to quarry, and fifty other disagreeable things to do, and I can't be idle with you.' Then I go into jagged up-hill and down-hill streets, where I am in the pastrycook's shop at one moment, and next moment in savage fastnesses of moor and morass, beyond the confines of civilisation, and I say to those murky and black-dusky streets, 'Will *you* come and be idle with me?' To which they reply, 'No, we can't, indeed, for we haven't the spirits, and we are startled by the echo of your feet on the sharp pavement, and we have so many goods in our shop-windows which nobody wants, and we have so much to do for a limited public which never comes to us to be done for, that we are altogether out of sorts and can't enjoy ourselves with any one.' So I go to the Post-office, and knock at the shutter, and I say to the Post-master, 'Will *you* come and be idle with me?' To which he rejoins, 'No, I really can't, for I live, as you may see, in such a very little Post-office, and pass my life behind such a very little shutter, that my hand, when I put it out, is as the hand of a giant crammed through the window of a dwarf's house at a fair, and I am a mere Post-office anchorite in a cell much too small for him, and I can't get out, and I can't get in, and I have no space to be idle in, even if I would.' So, the boy," said Mr. Goodchild, concluding the tale "comes back with the letters after all, and lives happy never afterwards."

But it may, not unreasonably, be asked — while Francis Goodchild was wandering hither and thither, storing his mind with perpetual observation of men and things, and sincerely believing himself to be the laziest creature in existence all the time — how did Thomas Idle, crippled and confined to the house, contrive to get through the hours of the day?

Prone on the sofa, Thomas made no attempt to get through the hours, but passively allowed the hours to get through *him*. Where other men in his situation would have read books and improved their minds, Thomas slept and rested his body. Where other men would have pondered anxiously over their future prospects, Thomas dreamed lazily of his past life. The one solitary thing he did, which most other people would have done in his place, was to resolve on making certain alterations and improvements in his mode of existence, as soon as the effects of the misfortune that had overtaken him had all passed away. Remembering that the current of his life had hitherto oozed along in one smooth stream of laziness, occasionally troubled on the surface by a slight passing ripple of industry, his present ideas on the subject of self-reform, inclined him — not as the reader may be disposed to imagine, to project schemes for a new existence of enterprise and exertion — but, on the contrary, to resolve that he would never, if he could possibly help it, be active or industrious again, throughout the whole of his future career.

It is due to Mr. Idle to relate that his mind sauntered towards this peculiar conclusion on distinct and logically-producible grounds. After reviewing, quite at his ease, and with many needful intervals of repose, the generally-placid spectacle of his past existence, he ar-

rived at the discovery that all the great disasters which had tried his patience and equanimity in early life, had been caused by his having allowed himself to be deluded into imitating some pernicious example of activity and industry that had been set him by others. The trials to which he here alludes were three in number, and may be thus reckoned up: First, the disaster of being an unpopular and a thrashed boy at school; secondly, the disaster of falling seriously ill; thirdly, the disaster of becoming acquainted with a great bore.

The first disaster occurred after Thomas had been an idle and a popular boy at school, for some happy years. One Christmas-time, he was stimulated by the evil example of a companion, whom he had always trusted and liked, to be untrue to himself, and to try for a prize at the ensuing half-yearly examination. He did try, and he got a prize — how, he did not distinctly know at the moment, and cannot remember now. No sooner, however, had the book — Moral Hints to the Young on the Value of Time — been placed in his hands, than the first troubles of his life began. The idle boys deserted him, as a traitor to their cause. The industrious boys avoided him, as a dangerous interloper; one of their number, who had always won the prize on previous occasions, expressing just resentment at the invasion of his privileges by calling Thomas into the playground, and then and there administering to him the first sound and genuine thrashing that he had received in his life. Unpopular from that moment, as a beaten boy, who belonged to no side and was rejected by all parties, young Idle soon lost caste with his masters, as he had previously lost caste with his school-fellows. He had forfeited the comfortable reputation of being the one

lazy member of the youthful community whom it was quite hopeless to punish. Never again did he hear the head-master say reproachfully to an industrious boy who had committed a fault, "I might have expected this in Thomas Idle, but it is inexcusable, sir, in you, who know better." Never more, after winning that fatal prize, did he escape the retributive imposition, or the avenging birch. From that time, the masters made him work, and the boys would not let him play. From that time his social position steadily declined, and his life at school became a perpetual burden to him.

So, again, with the second disaster. While Thomas was lazy, he was a model of health. His first attempt at active exertion and his first suffering from severe illness are connected together by the intimate relations of cause and effect. Shortly after leaving school, he accompanied a party of friends to a cricket-field, in his natural and appropriate character of spectator only. On the ground it was discovered that the players fell short of the required number, and facile Thomas was persuaded to assist in making up the complement. At a certain appointed time, he was roused from peaceful slumber in a dry ditch, and placed before three wickets with a bat in his hand. Opposite to him, behind three more wickets, stood one of his bosom friends, filling the situation (as he was informed) of bowler. No words can describe Mr. Idle's horror and amazement, when he saw this young man — on ordinary occasions, the meekest and mildest of human beings — suddenly contract his eyebrows, compress his lips, assume the aspect of an infuriated savage, run back a few steps, then run forward, and, without the slightest previous provocation, hurl a detestably hard ball with all his might straight at

Thomas's legs. Stimulated to preternatural activity of body and sharpness of eye by the instinct of self-preservation, Mr. Idle contrived, by jumping deftly aside at the right moment, and by using his bat (ridiculously narrow as it was for the purpose) as a shield, to preserve his life and limbs from the dastardly attack that had been made on both, to leave the full force of the deadly missile to strike his wicket instead of his leg; and to end the innings, so far as his side was concerned, by being immediately bowled out. Grateful for his escape he was about to return to the dry ditch, when he was peremptorily stopped, and told that the other side was "going in," and that he was expected to "field." His conception of the whole art and mystery of "fielding," may be summed up in the three words of serious advice which he privately administered to himself on that trying occasion — avoid the ball. Fortified by this sound and salutary principle, he took his own course, impervious alike to ridicule and abuse. Whenever the ball came near him, he thought of his shins, and got out of the way immediately. "Catch it!" "Stop it!" "Pitch it up!" were cries that passed by him like the idle wind that he regarded not. He ducked under it, he jumped over it, he whisked himself away from it on either side. Never once, throughout the whole innings did he and the ball come together on anything approaching to intimate terms. The unnatural activity of body which was necessarily called forth for the accomplishment of this result threw Thomas Idle, for the first time in his life, into a perspiration. The perspiration, in consequence of his want of practice in the management of that particular result of bodily activity, was suddenly checked; the inevitable chill succeeded; and that, in its turn, was

followed by a fever. For the first time since his birth, Mr. Idle found himself confined to his bed for many weeks together, wasted and worn by a long illness, of which his own disastrous muscular exertion had been the sole first cause.

The third occasion on which Thomas found reason to reproach himself bitterly for the mistake of having attempted to be industrious, was connected with his choice of a calling in life. Having no interest in the Church, he appropriately selected the next best profession for a lazy man in England — the Bar. Although the Benchers of the Inns of Court have lately abandoned their good old principles, and oblige their students to make some show of studying, in Mr. Idle's time no such innovation as this existed. Young men who aspired to the honourable title of barrister were, very properly, not asked to learn anything of the law, but were merely required to eat a certain number of dinners at the table of their Hall, and to pay a certain sum of money; and were called to the Bar as soon as they could prove that they had sufficiently complied with these extremely sensible regulations. Never did Thomas move more harmoniously in concert with his elders and betters than when he was qualifying himself for admission among the barristers of his native country. Never did he feel more deeply what real laziness was in all the serene majesty of its nature, than on the memorable day when he was called to the bar, after having carefully abstained from opening his law-books during his period of probation, except to fall asleep over them. How he could ever again have become industrious, even for the shortest period, after that great reward conferred upon his idleness, quite passes his comprehension. The kind benchers did everything

they could to show him the folly of exerting himself. They wrote out his probationary exercise for him, and never expected him even to take the trouble of reading it through when it was written. They invited him, with seven other choice spirits as lazy as himself, to come and be called to the bar, while they were sitting over their wine and fruit after dinner. They put his oaths of allegiance, and his dreadful official denunciations of the Pope and the Pretender so gently into his mouth, that he hardly knew how the words got there. They wheeled all their chairs softly round from the table, and sat surveying the young barristers with their backs to their bottles, rather than stand up, or adjourn to hear the exercises read. And when Mr. Idle and the seven unlabouring neophytes, ranged in order, as a class, with their backs considerably placed against a screen, had begun, in rotation, to read the exercises which they had not written, even then, each Benchers, true to the great lazy principle of the whole proceeding, stopped each neophyte before he had stammered through his first line, and bowed to him, and told him politely that he was a barrister from that moment. This was all the ceremony. It was followed by a social supper, and by the presentation, in accordance with ancient custom, of a pound of sweetmeats and a bottle of Madeira, offered in the way of needful refreshment, by each grateful neophyte to each beneficent Benchers. It may seem inconceivable that Thomas should ever have forgotten the great do-nothing principle instilled by such a ceremony as this; but it is, nevertheless, true, that certain designing students of industrious habits found him out, took advantage of his easy humour, persuaded him that it was discreditable to be a barrister and to know nothing what-

ever about the law, and lured him, by the force of their own evil example, into a conveyancer's chambers, to make up for lost time, and to qualify himself for practice at the Bar. After a fortnight of self-delusion, the curtain fell from his eyes; he resumed his natural character, and shut up his books. But the retribution which had hitherto always followed his little casual errors of industry followed them still. He could get away from the conveyancer's chambers, but he could not get away from one of the pupils, who had taken a fancy to him, — a tall, serious, raw-boned, hard-working, disputatious pupil, with ideas of his own about reforming the Law of Real Property, who has been the scourge of Mr. Idle's existence ever since the fatal day when he fell into the mistake of attempting to study the law. Before that time his friends were all sociable idlers like himself. Since that time the burden of bearing with a hard-working young man has become part of his lot in life. Go where he will now, he can never feel certain that the raw-boned pupil is not affectionately waiting for him round a corner, to tell him a little more about the Law of Real Property. Suffer as he may under the infliction, he can never complain, for he must always remember, with unavailing regret, that he has his own thoughtless industry to thank for first exposing him to the great social calamity of knowing a bore.

These events of his past life, with the significant results that they brought about, pass drowsily through Thomas Idle's memory, while he lies alone on the sofa at Allonby and elsewhere, dreaming away the time which his fellow-apprentice gets through so actively out of doors. Remembering the lesson of laziness which his past disasters teach, and bearing in mind also the fact

that he is crippled in one leg because he exerted himself to go up a mountain, when he ought to have known that his proper course of conduct was to stop at the bottom of it, he holds now, and will for the future firmly continue to hold, by his new resolution never to be industrious again, on any pretence whatever, for the rest of his life. The physical results of his accident have been related in a previous chapter. The moral results now stand on record; and, with the enumeration of these, that part of the present narrative which is occupied by the Episode of The Sprained Ankle may now perhaps be considered, in all its aspects, as finished and complete.

"How do you propose that we get through this present afternoon and evening?" demanded Thomas Idle, after two or three hours of the foregoing reflections at Allonby.

Mr. Goodchild faltered, looked out of window, looked in again, and said, as he had so often said before, "There is the sea, and here are the shrimps; let us eat 'em!"

But, the wise donkey was at that moment in the act of bolting: not with the irresolution of his previous efforts which had been wanting in sustained force of character, but with real vigor of purpose: shaking the dust off his mane and hind-feet at Allonby, and tearing away from it, as if he had nobly made up his mind that he never would be taken alive. At sight of this inspiring spectacle, which was visible from his sofa, Thomas Idle stretched his neck and dwelt upon it rapturously.

"Francis Goodchild," he then said, turning to his companion with a solemn air, "this is a delightful little Inn, excellently kept by the most comfortable of land-

ladies and the most attentive of landlords, but — the donkey's right!"

The words, "There is the sea, and here are the —," again trembled on the lips of Goodchild, unaccompanied however by any sound.

"Let us instantly pack the portmanteaus," said Thomas Idle, "pay the bill, and order a fly out, with instructions to the driver to follow the donkey!"

Mr. Goodchild, who had only wanted encouragement to disclose the real state of his feelings, and who had been pining beneath his weary secret, now burst into tears, and confessed that he thought another day in the place would be the death of him.

So, the two idle apprentices followed the donkey until the night was far advanced. Whether he was recaptured by the town-council, or is bolting at this hour through the United Kingdom, they know not. They hope he may be still bolting; if so, their best wishes are with him.

It entered Mr. Idle's head, on the borders of Cumberland, that there could be no idler place to stay at, except by snatches of a few minutes each, than a railway station. "An intermediate station on a line — a junction — anything of that sort," Thomas suggested. Mr. Goodchild approved of the idea as eccentric, and they journeyed on and on, until they came to such a station where there was an Inn.

"Here," said Thomas, "we may be luxuriously lazy; other people will travel for us, as it were, and we shall laugh at their folly."

It was a Junction-Station, where the wooden razors before mentioned shaved the air very often, and where the sharp electric-telegraph bell was in a very restless

condition. All manner of cross-lines of rails came zig-zaging into it, like a Congress of iron vipers; and, a little way out of it, a pointsman in an elevated signal-box was constantly going through the motions of drawing immense quantities of beer at a public-house bar. In one direction, confused perspectives of embankments and arches were to be seen from the platform; in the other, the rails soon disentangled themselves into two tracks, and shot away under a bridge, and curved round a corner. Sidings were there, in which empty luggage-vans and cattle-boxes often butted against each other as if they couldn't agree; and warehouses were there, in which great quantities of goods seemed to have taken the veil (of the consistency of tarpaulin), and to have retired from the world without any hope of getting back to it. Refreshment-rooms were there; one, for the hungry and thirsty Iron Locomotives where their coke and water were ready, and of good quality, for they were dangerous to play tricks with; the other, for the hungry and thirsty human Locomotives, who might take what they could get, and whose chief consolation was provided in the form of three terrific urns or vases of white metal, containing nothing, each forming a breastwork for a defiant and apparently much-injured woman.

Established at this Station, Mr. Thomas Idle and Mr. Francis Goodchild resolved to enjoy it. But, its contrasts were very violent, and there was also an infection in it.

First, as to its contrasts. They were only two, but they were Lethargy and Madness. The Station was either totally unconscious, or wildly raving. By day, in its unconscious state, it looked as if no life could come to it, — as if it were all rust, dust, and ashes — as if

the last train for ever, had gone without issuing any Return-Tickets — as if the last Engine had uttered its last shriek and burst. One awkward shove of the air from the wooden razor, and everything changed. Tight office-doors flew open, panels yielded, books, newspapers travelling-caps and wrappers broke out of brick walls, money chinked, conveyances oppressed by nightmares of luggage came careering into the yard, porters started up from secret places, ditto the much-injured women, the shining bell, who lived in a little tray on stilts by himself, flew into a man's hand and clamoured violently. The pointsman aloft in the signal-box made the motions of drawing, with some difficulty, hogsheads of beer. Down Train! More beer. Up Train! More beer. Cross Junction Train! More beer. Cattle Train! More beer. Goods Train! Simmering, whistling, trembling, rumbling, thundering. Trains on the whole confusion of intersecting rails, crossing one another, bumping one another, hissing one another, backing to go forward, tearing into distance to come close. People frantic. Exiles seeking restoration to their native carriages, and banished to remoter climes. More beer and more bell. Then, in a minute, the Station relapsed into stupor as the stoker of the Cattle Train, the last to depart, went gliding out of it, wiping the long nose of his oil-can with a dirty pocket-handkerchief.

By night, in its unconscious state, the station was not so much as visible. Something in the air, like an enterprising chemist's established in business on one of the boughs of Jack's beanstalk, was all that could be discerned of it under the stars. In a moment it would break out, a constellation of gas. In another moment, twenty rival chemists, on twenty rival beanstalks, came

into existence. Then, the Furies would be seen, waving their lurid torches up and down the confused perspectives of embankments and arches — would be heard, too, wailing and shrieking. Then, the Station would be full of palpitating trains, as in the day; with the heightening difference that they were not so clearly seen as in the day, whereas in the station walls, starting forward under the gas, like a hippopotamus's eyes, dazzled the human locomotives with the sauce-bottle, the cheap music, the bedstead, the distorted range of buildings where the patent safes are made, the gentleman in the rain with the registered umbrella, the lady returning from the ball with the registered respirator, and all their other embellishments. And now, the human locomotives, creased as to their countenances and purblind as to their eyes, would swarm forth in a heap, addressing themselves to the mysterious urns and the much-injured women; while the iron locomotives, dripping fire and water, shed their steam about plentifully, making the dull oxen in their cages, with heads depressed, and foam hanging from their mouths as their red looks glanced fearfully at the surrounding terrors, seem as though they had been drinking at half-frozen waters and were hung with icicles. Through the same steam would be caught glimpses of their fellow travellers, the sheep, getting their white kid faces together, away from the bars, and stuffing the interstices with trembling wool. Also, down among the wheels, of the man with the sledge-hammer, ringing the axles of the fast night-train; against whom the oxen have a misgiving that he is the man with the pole-axe who is to come by-and-bye, and so the nearest of them try to back, and get a purchase for a thrust at him through the bars. Suddenly, the bell would ring, the

steam would stop with one hiss and a yell, the chemists on the beanstalks would be busy, the avenging Furies would bestir themselves, the fast night-train would melt from eye and ear, the other trains going their ways more slowly would be heard faintly rattling in the distance like old-fashioned watches running down, the sauce-bottle and cheap music retired from view, even the bedstead went to bed, and there was no such visible thing as the Station to vex the cool wind in its blowing, or perhaps the autumn lightning, as it found out the iron rails.

The infection of the Station was this: — When it was in its raving state, the Apprentices found it impossible to be there, without labouring under the delusion that they were in a hurry. To Mr. Goodchild, whose ideas of idleness were so imperfect, this was no unpleasant hallucination, and accordingly that gentleman went through great exertions in yielding to it, and running up and down the platform, jostling everybody, under the impression that he had a highly important mission somewhere, and had not a moment to lose. But, to Thomas Idle, this contagion was so very unacceptable an incident of the situation, that he struck on the fourth day, and requested to be moved.

“This place fills me with a dreadful sensation,” said Thomas, “of having something to do. Remove me, Francis.”

“Where would you like to go next?” was the question of the ever-engaging Goodchild.

“I have heard there is a good old Inn at Lancaster, established in a fine old house: an Inn where they give you Bride-cake every day after dinner,” said Thomas Idle. “Let us eat Bride-cake without the trouble of

being married, or of knowing anybody in that ridiculous dilemma."

Mr. Goodchild, with a lover's sigh, assented. They departed from the Station in a violent hurry (for which, it is unnecessary to observe, there was not the least occasion), and were delivered at the fine old house at Lancaster, on the same night.

It is Mr. Goodchild's opinion, that if a visitor on his arrival at Lancaster could be accommodated with a pole which would push the opposite side of the street some yards farther off, it would be better for all parties. Protesting against being required to live in a trench, and obliged to speculate all day upon what the people can possibly be doing within a mysterious opposite window, which is a shop-window to look at, but not a shop-window in respect of its offering nothing for sale and declining to give any account whatever of itself, Mr. Goodchild concedes Lancaster to be a pleasant place. A place dropped in the midst of a charming landscape, a place with a fine ancient fragment of castle, a place of lovely walks, a place possessing staid old houses richly fitted with old Honduras mahogany, which has grown so dark with time that it seems to have got something of a retrospective mirror-quality into itself, and to show the visitor, in the depths of its grain, through all its polish, the hue of the wretched slaves who groaned long ago under old Lancaster merchants. And Mr. Goodchild adds that the stones of Lancaster do sometimes whisper, even yet, of rich men passed away — upon whose great prosperity some of these old doorways frowned sullen in the brightest weather — that their slave-gain turned to curses, as the Arabian Wizard's money turned to leaves, and that no good ever came of it, even unto the

third and fourth generations, until it was wasted and gone.

It was a gallant sight to behold, the Sunday procession of the Lancaster elders to Church — all in black, and looking fearfully like a funeral without the Body — under the escort of Three Beadles.

"Think," said Francis, as he stood at the Inn window, admiring, "of being taken to the sacred edifice by three Beadles! I have, in my early time, been taken out of it by one Beadle; but, to be taken into it by three, O Thomas, is a distinction I shall never enjoy!"

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Mr. Goodchild had looked out of the Lancaster Inn-window for two hours on end, with great perseverance, he began to entertain a misgiving that he was growing industrious. He therefore set himself next, to explore the country from the tops of all the steep hills in the neighbourhood.

He came back at dinner-time, red and glowing, to tell Thomas Idle what he had seen. Thomas, on his back reading, listened with great composure, and asked him whether he really had gone up those hills, and bothered himself with those views, and walked all those miles?

"Because I want to know," added Thomas, "what you would say of it, if you were obliged to do it?"

"It would be different, then," said Francis. "It would be work, then; now, it's play."

"Play!" repeated Thomas Idle, utterly repudiating the reply. "Play! Here is a man goes systematically tearing himself to pieces, and putting himself through an

incessant course of training, as if he were always under articles to fight a match for the champion's belt, and he calls it Play! Play!" exclaimed Thomas Idle, scornfully contemplating his one boot in the air. "You *can't* play. You don't know what it is. You make work of everything."

The bright Goodchild amiably smiled.

"So you do," said Thomas. "I mean it. To me you are an absolutely terrible fellow. You do nothing like another man. Where another fellow would fall into a footbath of action or emotion, you fall into a mine. Where any other fellow would be a painted butterfly, you are a fiery dragon. Where another man would stake a sixpence, you stake your existence. If you were to go up in a balloon, you would make for Heaven; and if you were to dive into the depths of the earth, nothing short of the other place would content you. What a fellow you are, Francis!"

The cheerful Goodchild laughed.

"It's all very well to laugh, but I wonder you don't feel it to be serious," said Idle.

"A man who can do nothing by halves appears to me to be a fearful man."

"Tom, Tom," returned Goodchild, "if I can do nothing by halves, and be nothing by halves, it's pretty clear that you must take me as a whole, and make the best of me."

With this philosophical rejoinder, the airy Goodchild clapped Mr. Idle on the shoulder in a final manner, and they sat down to dinner.

"By the bye," said Goodchild, "I have been over a lunatic asylum too, since I have been out."

"He has been," exclaimed Thomas Idle, casting up

his eyes, "over a lunatic asylum! Not content with being as great an Ass as Captain Barclay in the pedestrian way, he makes a Lunacy Commissioner of himself — for nothing!"

"An immense place," said Goodchild, "admirable offices, very good arrangements, very good attendants; altogether a remarkable place."

"And what did you see there?" asked Mr. Idle, adapting Hamlet's advice to the occasion, and assuming the virtue of interest, though he had it not.

"The usual thing," said Francis Goodchild, with a sigh. "Long groves of blighted men-and-women-trees; interminable avenues of hopeless faces; numbers, without the slightest power of really combining for any earthly purpose; a society of human creatures who have nothing in common but that they have all lost the power of being humanly social with one another."

"Take a glass of wine with me," said Thomas Idle, "and let *us* be social."

"In one gallery, Tom," pursued Francis Goodchild, "which looked to me about the length of the Long Walk at Windsor, more or less —"

"Probably, less," observed Thomas Idle.

"In one gallery, which was otherwise quite clear of patients (for they were all out), there was a poor little dark-chinned, meagre man, with a perplexed brow and a pensive face, stooping low over the matting on the floor, and picking out with his thumb and forefinger the course of its fibres. The afternoon sun was slanting in at the large end-window, and there were cross patches of light and shade all down the vista, made by the unseen windows and the open doors of the little sleeping cells on either side. In about the centre of the

perspective, under an arch, regardless of the pleasant weather, regardless of the solitude, regardless of approaching footsteps, was the poor little dark-chinned, meagre man, poring over the matting. 'What are you doing there?' said my conductor, when we came to him. He looked up, and pointed to the matting. 'I wouldn't do that, I think,' said my conductor, kindly; 'if I were you, I would go and read, or I would lie down if I felt tired; but I wouldn't do that.' The patient considered a moment, and vacantly answered, 'No, sir, I won't; I'll — I'll go and read,' and so he lamely shuffled away into one of the little rooms. I turned my head before we had gone many paces. He had already come out again, and was again poring over the matting, and tracking out its fibres with his thumb and fore-finger. I stopped to look at him, and it came into my mind, that probably the course of those fibres as they plaited in and out, over and under, was the only course of things in the whole wide world that it was left to him to understand — that his darkening intellect had narrowed down to the small cleft of light which showed him, 'This piece was twisted this way, went in here, passed under, came out there, was carried on away here to the right where I now put my finger on it, and in this progress of events, the thing was made and came to be here.' Then, I wondered whether he looked into the matting, next, to see if it could show him anything of the process through which *he* came to be there, so strangely poring over it. Then, I thought how all of us, God help us! in our different ways are poring over our bits of matting, blindly enough, and what confusions and mysteries we make in the patterns. I had a sadder

fellow-feeling with the little dark-chinned, meagre man, by that time, and I came away."

Mr. Idle diverting the conversation to grouse, custards, and bride-cake, Mr. Goodchild followed in the same direction. The bride-cake was as bilious and indigestible as if a real Bride had cut it, and the dinner it completed was an admirable performance.

The house was a genuine old house of a very quaint description, teeming with old carvings, and beams, and panels, and having an excellent old staircase, with a gallery or upper staircase, cut off from it by a curious fencework of old oak, or of the old Honduras Mahogany wood. It was, and is, and will be, for many a long year to come, a remarkably picturesque house; and a certain grave mystery lurking in the depth of the old mahogany panels, as if they were so many deep pools of dark water — such, indeed, as they had been much among when they were trees — gave it a very mysterious character after nightfall.

When Mr. Goodchild and Mr. Idle had first alighted at the door, and stepped into the sombre handsome old hall, they had been received by half-a-dozen noiseless old men in black, all dressed exactly alike, who glided up the stairs with the obliging landlord and waiter — but without appearing to get into their way, or to mind whether they did or no — and who had filed off to the right and left on the old staircase, as the guests entered their sitting-room. It was then broad, bright day. But, Mr. Goodchild had said, when their door was shut, "Who on earth are those old men!" And afterwards, both on going out and coming in, he had noticed that there were no old men to be seen.

Neither, had the old men, or any one of the old men, reappeared since. The two friends had passed a night in the house, but had seen nothing more of the old men. Mr. Goodchild, in rambling about it, had looked along passages, and glanced in at doorways, but had encountered no old men; neither did it appear that any old men were, by any member of the establishment, missed or expected.

Another odd circumstance impressed itself on their attention. It was, that the door of their sitting-room was never left untouched for a quarter of an hour. It was opened with hesitation, opened with confidence, opened a little way, opened a good way, — always clapped-to again without a word of explanation. They were reading, they were writing, they were eating, they were drinking, they were talking, they were dozing; the door was always opened at an unexpected moment, and they looked towards it, and it was clapped-to again, and nobody was to be seen. When this had happened fifty times or so, Mr. Goodchild had said to his companion, jestingly: "I begin to think, Tom, there was something wrong about those six old men."

Night had come again, and they had been writing for two or three hours: writing, in short, a portion of the lazy notes from which these lazy sheets are taken. They had left off writing, and glasses were on the table between them. The house was closed and quiet, and the town was quiet. Around the head of Thomas Idle, as he lay upon his sofa, hovered light wreaths of fragrant smoke. The temples of Francis Goodchild, as he leaned back in his chair, with his two hands clasped behind his head, and his legs crossed, were similarly decorated.

They had been discussing several idle subjects of speculation, not omitting the strange old men, and were still so occupied, when Mr. Goodchild abruptly changed his attitude to wind up his watch. They were just becoming drowsy enough to be stopped in their talk by any such slight check. Thomas Idle, who was speaking at the moment, paused and said, "How goes it?"

"One," said Goodchild.

As if he had ordered One old man, and the order were promptly executed (truly, all orders were so, in that excellent hotel), the door opened, and One old man stood there.

He did not come in, but stood with the door in his hand.

"One of the six, Tom, at last!" said Mr. Goodchild, in a surprised whisper. — "Sir, your pleasure?"

"Sir, *your* pleasure?" said the One old man.

"I didn't ring."

"The Bell did," said the One old man.

He said BELL, in a deep strong way, that would have expressed the church Bell.

"I had the pleasure, I believe, of seeing you, yesterday?" said Goodchild.

"I cannot undertake to say for certain," was the grim reply of the One old man.

"I think you saw me? Did you not?"

"Saw *you*?" said the old man. "O yes, I saw *you*. But, I see many who never see me."

A chilled, slow, earthy, fixed old man. A cadaverous old man of measured speech. An old man who seemed as unable to wink, as if his eyelids had been nailed to his forehead. An old man whose eyes — two spots of

fire — had no more motion than if they had been connected with the back of his skull by screws driven through it, and rivetted and bolted outside, among his grey hair.

The night had turned so cold, to Mr. Goodchild's sensations, that he shivered. He remarked lightly, and half apologetically, "I think somebody is walking over my grave."

"No," said the weird old man, "there is no one there."

Mr. Goodchild looked at Idle, but Idle lay with his head enwreathed in smoke.

"No one there?" said Goodchild.

"There is no one at your grave, I assure you," said the old man.

He had come in and shut the door, and he now sat down. He did not bend himself to sit, as other people do, but seemed to sink bolt upright, as if in water, until the chair stopped him.

"My friend, Mr. Idle," said Goodchild, extremely anxious to introduce a third person into the conversation.

"I am," said the old man, without looking at him, "at Mr. Idle's service."

"If you are an old inhabitant of this place," Francis Goodchild resumed:

"Yes."

— "Perhaps you can decide a point my friend and I were in doubt upon, this morning. They hang condemned criminals at the Castle, I believe?"

"I believe so," said the old man.

"Are their faces turned towards that noble prospect?"

"Your face is turned," replied the old man, "to the Castle wall. When you are tied up, you see its stones expanding and contracting violently, and a similar expansion and contraction seem to take place in your own head and breast. Then, there is a rush of fire and an earthquake, and the Castle springs into the air, and you tumble down a precipice."

His cravat appeared to trouble him. He put his hand to his throat, and moved his neck from side to side. He was an old man of a swollen character of face, and his nose was immoveably hitched up on one side, as if by a little hook inserted in that nostril. Mr. Goodchild felt exceedingly uncomfortable, and began to think the night was hot, and not cold.

"A strong description, sir," he observed.

"A strong sensation," the old man rejoined.

Again, Mr. Goodchild looked to Mr. Thomas Idle; but, Thomas lay on his back with his face attentively turned towards the One old man, and made no sign. At this time Mr. Goodchild believed that he saw two threads of fire stretch from the old man's eyes to his own, and there attach themselves. (Mr. Goodchild writes the present account of his experience, and, with the utmost solemnity, protests that he had the strongest sensation upon him of being forced to look at the old man along those two fiery films, from that moment.)

"I must tell it to you," said the old man, with a ghastly and a stony stare.

"What?" asked Francis Goodchild.

"You know where it took place. Yonder!"

Whether he pointed to the room above, or to the room below, or to any room in that old house, or to a room in some other old house in that old town, Mr. Good-

child was not, nor is, nor ever can be, sure. He was confused by the circumstance that the right fore-finger of the One old man seemed to dip itself in one of the threads of fire, light itself, and make a fiery start in the air, as it pointed somewhere. Having pointed somewhere, it went out.

"You know she was a Bride," said the old man.

"I know they still send up Bride-cake," Mr. Goodchild faltered. "This is a very oppressive air."

"She was a Bride," said the old man. "She was a fair, flaxen-haired, large-eyed girl, who had no character, no purpose. A weak, credulous, incapable, helpless nothing. Not like her mother. No, no. It was her father whose character she reflected.

"Her mother had taken care to secure everything to herself, for her own life, when the father of this girl (a child at that time) died — of sheer helplessness; no other disorder — and then He renewed the acquaintance that had once subsisted between the mother and Him. He had been put aside for the flaxen-haired, large-eyed man (or nonentity) with Money. He could overlook that for Money. He wanted compensation in Money.

"So, he returned to the side of that woman the mother, made love to her again, danced attendance on her, and submitted himself to her whims. She wreaked upon him every whim she had, or could invent. He bore it. And the more he bore, the more he wanted compensation in Money, and the more he was resolved to have it.

"But, lo! Before he got it, she cheated him. In one of her imperious states, she froze, and never thawed again. She put her hands to her head one night, uttered a cry, stiffened, lay in that attitude certain hours,

and died. And he had got no compensation from her in Money, yet. Blight and Murrain on her! Not a penny.

"He had hated her throughout that second pursuit, and had longed for retaliation on her. He now counterfeited her signature to an instrument, leaving all she had to leave, to her daughter — ten years old then — to whom the property passed absolutely, and appointing himself the daughter's Guardian. When He slid it under the pillow of the bed on which she lay, He bent down in the deaf ear of Death, and whispered: 'Mistress Pride, I have determined a long time that, dead or alive, you must make me compensation in Money.'

"So, now there were only two left. Which two were, He, and the fair flaxen-haired, large-eyed foolish daughter, who afterwards became the Bride.

"He put her to school. In a secret, dark, oppressive, ancient house, he put her to school with a watchful and unscrupulous woman. 'My worthy lady,' he said, 'here is a mind to be formed; will you help me to form it?' She accepted the trust. For which she, too, wanted compensation in Money, and had it.

"The girl was formed in the fear of him, and in the conviction, that there was no escape from him. She was taught, from the first, to regard him as her future husband — the man who must marry her — the destiny that overshadowed her — the appointed certainty that could never be evaded. The poor fool was soft white wax in their hands, and took the impression that they put upon her. It hardened with time. It became a part of herself. Inseparable from herself, and only to be torn away from her, by tearing life away from her.

“Eleven years she lived in the dark house and its gloomy garden. He was jealous of the very light and air getting to her, and they kept her close. He stopped the wide chimneys, shaded the little windows, left the strong-stemmed ivy to wander where it would over the house-front, the moss to accumulate on the untrimmed fruit-trees in the red-walled garden, the weeds to overrun its green and yellow walks. He surrounded her with images of sorrow and desolation. He caused her to be filled with fears of the place and of the stories that were told of it, and then on pretext of correcting them, to be left in it in solitude, or made to shrink about it in the dark. When her mind was most depressed and fullest of terrors, then, he would come out of one of the hiding-places from which he overlooked her, and present himself as her sole resource.

“Thus, by being from her childhood the one embodiment her life presented to her of power to coërce and power to relieve, power to bind and power to loose, the ascendancy over her weakness was secured. She was twenty-one years and twenty-one days old, when he brought her home to the gloomy house, his half-witted, frightened, and submissive Bride of three weeks.

“He had dismissed the governess by that time — what he had left to do, he could best do alone — and they came back, upon a rainy night, to the scene of her long preparation. She turned to him upon the threshold, as the rain was dripping from the porch, and said:

“‘O sir, it is the Death-watch ticking for me!’

“‘Well!’ he answered. ‘And if it were?’

“‘O sir!’ she returned to him, ‘look kindly on me,

and be merciful to me! I beg your pardon. I will do anything you wish, if you will only forgive me!

"That had become the poor fool's constant song: 'I beg your pardon,' and 'Forgive me!'

"She was not worth hating; he felt nothing but contempt for her. But, she had long been in the way, and he had long been weary, and the work was near its end, and had to be worked out.

"'You fool,' he said. 'Go up the stairs!'

"She obeyed very quickly, murmuring, 'I will do anything you wish!' When he came into the Bride's Chamber, having been a little retarded by the heavy fastenings of the great door (for they were alone in the house, and he had arranged that the people who attended on them should come and go in the day), he found her withdrawn to the furthest corner, and there standing pressed against the paneling as if she would have shrunk through it: her flaxen hair all wild about her face, and her large eyes staring at him in vague terror.

"'What are you afraid of? Come and sit down by me.'

"'I will do anything you wish. I beg your pardon, sir. Forgive me!' Her monotonous tune as usual.

"'Ellen, here is a writing that you must write out to-morrow, in your own hand. You may as well be seen by others, busily engaged upon it. When you have written it all fairly, and corrected all mistakes, call in any two people there may be about the house, and sign your name to it before them. Then, put it in your bosom to keep it safe, and when I sit here again to-morrow night, give it to me.'

"'I will do it all, with the greatest care. I will do anything you wish.'

“‘Don’t shake and tremble, then.’

“‘I will try my utmost not to do it — if you will only forgive me!’

“Next day, she sat down at her desk, and did ‘as she had been told. He often passed in and out of the room, to observe her, and always saw her slowly and laboriously writing: repeating to herself the words she copied, in appearance quite mechanically, and without caring or endeavouring to comprehend them, so that she did her task. He saw her follow the directions she had received, in all particulars; and at night, when they were alone again in the same Bride’s Chamber, and he drew his chair to the hearth, she timidly approached him from her distant seat, took the paper from her bosom, and gave it into his hand.

“It secured all her possessions to him, in the event of her death. He put her before him, face to face, that he might look at her steadily; and he asked her, in so many plain words, neither fewer nor more, did she know that?

“There were spots of ink upon the bosom of her white dress, and they made her face look whiter and her eyes look larger as she nodded her head. There were spots of ink upon the hand with which she stood before him, nervously plaiting and folding her white skirts.

“He took her by the arm, and looked her, yet more closely and steadily, in the face. ‘Now, die! I have done with you.’”

“She shrunk, and uttered a low, suppressed cry.

“‘I am not going to kill you. I will not endanger my life for yours. Die!’

“He sat before her in the gloomy Bride’s Chamber, day after day, night after night, looking the word at her

when he did not utter it. As often as her large unmeaning eyes were raised from the hands in which she rocked her head, to the stern figure, sitting with crossed arms and knitted forehead, in the chair, they read in it, 'Die!' When she dropped asleep in exhaustion, she was called back to shuddering consciousness, by the whisper, 'Die!' When she fell upon her old entreaty to be pardoned, she was answered, 'Die!' When she had outwatched and out-suffered the long night, and the rising sun flamed into the sombre room, she heard it hailed with, 'Another day and not dead? — Die!'

"Shut up in the deserted mansion, aloof from all mankind, and engaged alone in such a struggle without any respite, it came to this — that either he must die, or she. He knew it very well, and concentrated his strength against her feebleness. Hours upon hours he held her by the arm when her arm was black where he held it, and bade her Die!

"It was done, upon a windy morning, before sunrise. He computed the time to be half-past four; but, his forgotten watch had run down, and he could not be sure. She had broken away from him in the night, with loud and sudden cries — the first of that kind to which she had given vent — and he had had to put his hands over her mouth. Since then, she had been quiet in the corner of the paneling where she had sunk down; and he had left her, and had gone back with his folded arms and his knitted forehead to his chair.

"Paler in the pale light, more colourless than ever in the leaden dawn, he saw her coming, trailing herself along the floor towards him — a white wreck of hair, and dress, and wild eyes, pushing itself on by an irresolute and bending hand.

“‘O, forgive me! I will do anything. O, sir, pray tell me I may live!’

“‘Die!’

“‘Are you so resolved? Is there no hope for me?’

“‘Die!’

“Her large eyes strained themselves with wonder and fear; wonder and fear changed to reproach; reproach to blank nothing. It was done. He was not at first so sure it was done, but that the morning sun was hanging jewels in her hair — he saw the diamond, emerald, and ruby, glittering among it in little points, as he stood looking down at her — when he lifted her and laid her on her bed.

“She was soon laid in the ground. And now they were all gone, and he had compensated himself well.

“He had a mind to travel. Not that he meant to waste his Money, for he was a pinching man and liked his Money dearly (liked nothing else, indeed), but, that he had grown tired of the desolate house and wished to turn his back upon it and have done with it. But, the house was worth Money, and Money must not be thrown away. He determined to sell it before he went. That it might look the less wretched and bring a better price, he hired some labourers to work in the overgrown garden; to cut out the dead wood, trim the ivy that dropped in heavy masses over the windows and gables, and clear the walks in which the weeds were growing mid-leg high.

“He worked, himself, along with them. He worked later than they did, and, one evening at dusk, was left working alone, with his bill-hook in his hand. One autumn evening, when the Bride was five weeks dead.

"‘It grows too dark to work longer,’ he said to himself, ‘I must give over for the night.’"

"He detested the house, and was loath to enter it. He looked at the dark porch waiting for him like a tomb, and felt that it was an accursed house. Near to the porch, and near to where he stood, was a tree whose branches waved before the old bay-window of the Bride's Chamber, where it had been done. The tree swung suddenly, and made him start. It swung again, although the night was still. Looking up into it, he saw a figure among the branches.

"It was the figure of a young man. The face looked down, as his looked up; the branches cracked and swayed; the figure rapidly descended, and slid upon its feet before him. A slender youth of about her age, with long light brown hair.

"‘What thief are you?’ he said, seizing the youth by the collar.

"The young man, in shaking himself free, swung him a blow with his arm across the face and throat. They closed, but the young man got from him and stepped back, crying, with great eagerness and horror, ‘Don't touch me! I would as lieve be touched by the Devil!’

"He stood still, with his bill-hook in his hand, looking at the young man. For, the young man's look was the counterpart of her last look, and he had not expected ever to see that again.

"‘I am no thief. Even if I were, I would not have a coin of your wealth, if it would buy me the Indies. You murderer!’

"‘What!’

"‘I climbed it,’ said the young man, pointing up

into the tree, 'for the first time, nigh four years ago. I climbed it, to look at her. I saw her. I spoke to her. I have climbed it, many a time, to watch and listen for her. I was a boy, hidden among its leaves, when from that bay-window she gave me this!'

"He showed a tress of flaxen hair, tied with a mourning ribbon.

"'Her life,' said the young man, 'was a life of mourning. She gave me this, as a token of it, and a sign that she was dead to every one but you. If I had been older, if I had seen her sooner, I might have saved her from you. But, she was fast in the web when I first climbed the tree, and what could I do then to break it!'

"In saying those words, he burst into a fit of sobbing and crying: weakly at first, then passionately.

"'Murderer! I climbed the tree on the night when you brought her back. I heard her, from the tree, speak of the Death-watch at the door. I was three times in the tree while you were shut up with her, slowly killing her. I saw her, from the tree, lie dead upon her bed. I have watched you, from the tree, for proofs and traces of your guilt. The manner of it, is a mystery to me yet, but I will pursue you until you have rendered up your life to the hangman. You shall never, until then, be rid of me. I loved her! I can know no relenting towards you. Murderer, I loved her!'

"The youth was bare-headed, his hat having fluttered away in his descent from the tree. He moved towards the gate. He had to pass — Him — to get to it. There was breadth for two old-fashioned carriages abreast; and the youth's abhorrence, openly expressed in every feature of his face and limb of his body, and very hard to bear,

had verge enough to keep itself at a distance in. He (by which I mean the other) had not stirred hand or foot, since he had stood still to look at the boy. He faced round, now, to follow him with his eyes. As the back of the bare light-brown head was turned to him, he saw a red curve stretch from his hand to it. He knew, before he threw the bill-hook, where it had alighted — I say, had alighted, and not, would alight; for, to his clear perception the thing was done before he did it. It cleft the head, and it remained there, and the boy lay on his face.

“He buried the body in the night, at the foot of the tree. As soon as it was light in the morning, he worked at turning up all the ground near the tree, and hacking and hewing at the neighbouring bushes and undergrowth. When the laborers came, there was nothing suspicious, and nothing was suspected.

“But, he had, in a moment, defeated all his precautions, and destroyed the triumph of the scheme he had so long concerted, and so successfully worked out. He had got rid of the Bride, and had acquired her fortune without endangering his life; but now, for a death by which he had gained nothing, he had evermore to live with a rope around his neck.

“Beyond this, he was chained to the house of gloom and horror, which he could not endure. Being afraid to sell it or to quit it, lest discovery should be made, he was forced to live in it. He hired two old people, man and wife, for his servants; and dwelt in it, and dreaded it. His great difficulty, for a long time, was the garden. Whether he should keep it trim, whether he should suffer it to fall into its former state of neglect, what

would be the least likely way of attracting attention to it?

"He took the middle course of gardening, himself, in his evening leisure, and of then calling the old serving-man to help him; but, of never letting him work there alone. And he made himself an arbour over against the tree, where he could sit and see that it was safe.

"As the seasons changed, and the tree changed, his mind perceived dangers that were always changing. In the leafy time, he perceived that the upper boughs were growing into the form of the young man — that they made the shape of him exactly, sitting in a forked branch swinging in the wind. In the time of the falling leaves, he perceived that they came down from the tree, forming tell-tale letters on the path, or that they had a tendency to heap themselves into a church-yard-mound above the grave. In the winter, when the tree was bare, he perceived that the boughs swung at him the ghost of the blow the young man had given, and that they threatened him openly. In the spring, when the sap was mounting in the trunk, he asked himself, were the dried-up particles of blood mounting with it: to make out more obviously this year than last, the leaf-screened figure of the young man, swinging in the wind?

"However, he turned his Money over and over, and still over. He was in the dark trade, the gold-dust trade, and most secret trades that yielded great returns. In ten years, he had turned his Money over, so many times, that the traders and shippers who had dealings with him, absolutely did not lie — for once — when they declared that he had increased his fortune, Twelve Hundred Per Cent.

"He possessed his riches one hundred years ago,

when people could be lost easily. He had heard who the youth was, from hearing of the search that was made after him; but, it died away, and the youth was forgotten.

"The annual round of changes in the tree had been repeated ten times since the night of the burial at its foot, when there was a great thunder-storm over this place. It broke at midnight, and raged until morning. The first intelligence he heard from his old serving-man that morning, was, that the tree had been struck by Lightning.

"It had been riven down the stem, in a very surprising manner, and the stem lay in two blighted shafts: one resting against the house, and one against a portion of the old red garden-wall in which its fall had made a gap. The fissure went down the tree to a little above the earth, and there stopped. There was great curiosity to see the tree, and, with most of his former fears revived, he sat in his arbour — grown quite an old man — watching the people who came to see it.

"They quickly began to come, in such dangerous numbers, that he closed his garden-gate and refused to admit any more. But, there were certain men of science who travelled from a distance to examine the tree, and, in an evil hour, he let them in — Blight and Murrain on them, let them in!

"They wanted to dig up the ruin by the roots, and closely examine it, and the earth about it. Never, while he lived! They offered money for it. They! Men of science, whom he could have bought by the gross, with a scratch of his pen! He showed them the garden-gate again, and locked and barred it.

"But, they were bent on doing what they wanted to

do, and they bribed the old serving-man — a thankless wretch who regularly complained when he received his wages, of being underpaid — and they stole into the garden by night with their lanterns, picks, and shovels, and fell to at the tree. He was lying in a turret-room on the other side of the house (the Bride's Chamber had been unoccupied ever since), but he soon dreamed of picks and shovels, and got up.

“He came to an upper window on that side, whence he could see their lanterns, and them, and the loose earth in a heap which he had himself disturbed and put back, when it was last turned to the air. It was found! They had that minute lighted on it. They were all bending over it. One of them said, ‘The skull is fractured;’ and another, ‘See here the bones;’ and another, ‘See here the clothes;’ and then the first struck in again, and said, ‘A rusty bill-hook!’

“He became sensible, next day, that he was already put under a strict watch, and that he could go nowhere without being followed. Before a week was out, he was taken and laid in hold. The circumstances were gradually pieced together against him, with a desperate malignity, and an appalling ingenuity. But, see the justice of men, and how it was extended to him! He was further accused of having poisoned that girl in the Bride's Chamber. He, who had carefully and expressly avoided imperilling a hair of his head for her, and who had seen her die of her own incapacity!

“There was doubt for which of the two murders he should be first tried; but, the real one was chosen, and he was found Guilty, and cast for Death. Bloodthirsty wretches! They would have made him Guilty of anything, so set they were upon having his life.

"His money could do nothing to save him, and he was hanged. *I* am He, and I was hanged at Lancaster Castle with my face to the wall, a hundred years ago!"

At this terrific announcement, Mr. Goodchild tried to rise and cry out. But, the two fiery lines extending from the old man's eyes to his own, kept him down, and he could not utter a sound. His sense of hearing, however, was acute, and he could hear the clock strike Two. No sooner had he heard the clock strike Two, than he saw before him Two old men!

Two.

The eyes of each, connected with his eyes by two films of fire: each, exactly like the other: each, addressing him at precisely one and the same instant: each, gnashing the same teeth in the same head, with the same twitched nostril above them, and the same suffused expression around it. Two old men. Differing in nothing, equally distinct to the sight, the copy no fainter than the original, the second as real as the first.

"At what time," said the Two old men, "did you arrive at the door below?"

"At Six."

"And there were Six old men upon the stairs!"

Mr. Goodchild having wiped the perspiration from his brow, or tried to do it, the Two old men proceeded in one voice, and in the singular number:

"I had been anatomised, but had not yet had my skeleton put together and re-hung on an iron hook, when it began to be whispered that the Bride's Chamber was haunted. It *was* haunted, and I was there.

"*We* were there. She and I were there. I, in the chair upon the hearth; she, a white wreck again, trailing itself towards me on the floor. But, I was the speaker no more. She was the sole speaker now, and the one word that she said to me from midnight until dawn was, 'Live!'

"The youth was there, likewise. In the tree outside the window. Coming and going in the moonlight, as the tree bent and gave. He has, ever since, been there; peeping in at me in my torment; revealing to me by snatches, in the pale lights and slatey shadows where he comes and goes, bare-headed — a bill-hook, standing edgewise in his hair.

"In the Bride's Chamber, every night from midnight until dawn — one month in the year excepted, as I am going to tell you — he hides in the tree, and she comes towards me on the floor; always approaching; never coming nearer; always visible as if by moonlight, whether the moon shines or no; always saying, from midnight until dawn, her one word, 'Live!'

"But, in the month wherein I was forced out of this life — this present month of thirty days — the Bride's Chamber is empty and quiet. Not so my old dungeon. Not so the rooms where I was restless and afraid, ten years. Both are fitfully haunted then. At One in the morning, I am what you saw me when the clock struck that hour — One old man. At Two in the morning, I am Two old men. At Three, I am Three. By Twelve at noon, I am Twelve old men, One for every hundred per cent of old gain. Every one of the Twelve, with Twelve times my old power of suffering and agony. From that hour until Twelve at night, I, Twelve old men in anguish and fearful foreboding, wait for the

coming of the executioner. At Twelve 'at night, I, Twelve old men turned off, swing invisible outside Lancaster Castle, with Twelve faces to the wall!

"When the Bride's Chamber was first haunted, it was known to me that this punishment would never cease, until I could make its nature, and my story, known to two living men together. I waited for the coming of two living men together into the Bride's Chamber, years upon years. It was infused into my knowledge (of the means I am ignorant) that if two living men, with their eyes open, could be in the Bride's Chamber at One in the morning, they would see me sitting in my chair.

"At length, the whispers that the room was spiritually troubled, brought two men to try the adventure. I was scarcely struck upon the hearth at midnight (I come there as if the Lightning blasted me into being), when I heard them ascending the stairs. Next, I saw them enter. One of them was a bold, gay, active man, in the prime of life, some five and forty years of age; the other, a dozen years younger. They brought provisions with them in a basket, and bottles. A young woman accompanied them, with wood and coals for the lighting of the fire. When she had lighted it, the bold, gay, active man accompanied her along the gallery outside the room, to see her safely down the staircase, and came back laughing.

"He locked the door, examined the chamber, put out the contents of the basket on the table before the fire — little recking of me, in my appointed station on the hearth, close to him — and filled the glasses, and ate and drank. His companion did the same, and was as cheerful and confident as he; though he was the leader.

When they had supped, they laid pistols on the table, turned to the fire, and began to smoke their pipes of foreign make.

"They had travelled together, and had been much together, and had an abundance of subjects in common. In the midst of their talking and laughing, the younger man made a reference to the leader's being always ready for any adventure; that one, or any other. He replied in these words:

"'Not quite so, Dick; if I am afraid of nothing else, I am afraid of myself.'

"His companion seeming to grow a little dull, asked him, in what sense? How?

"'Why, thus,' he returned. 'Here is a Ghost to be disproved. Well! I cannot answer for what my fancy might do if I were alone here, or what tricks my senses might play with me if they had me to themselves. But, in company with another man, and especially with you, Dick, I would consent to outface all the Ghosts that were ever told of in the universe.'

"'I had not the vanity to suppose that I was of so much importance to-night,' said the other.

"'Of so much,' rejoined the leader, more seriously than he had spoken yet, 'that I would, for the reason I have given, on no account have undertaken to pass the night here alone.'

"It was within a few minutes of One. The head of the younger man had drooped when he made his last remark, and it drooped lower now.

"'Keep awake, Dick!' said the leader, gaily. 'The small hours are the worst.'

"He tried, but his head drooped again.

"'Dick!' urged the leader. 'Keep awake!'

"‘I can’t,’ he indistinctly muttered. ‘I don’t know what strange influence is stealing over me. I can’t.’

"His companion looked at him with a sudden horror, and I, in my different way, felt a new horror also; for, it was on the stroke of One, and I felt that the second watcher was yielding to me, and that the curse was upon me that I must send him to sleep.

"‘Get up and walk, Dick!’ cried the leader. ‘Try!’

"It was in vain to go behind the slumberer’s chair and shake him. One o’clock sounded, and I was present to the elder man, and he stood transfixed before me.

"To him alone, I was obliged to relate my story, without hope of benefit. To him alone, I was an awful phantom making a quite useless confession. I foresee it will ever be the same. The two living men together will never come to release me. When I appear, the senses of one of the two will be locked in sleep; he will neither see nor hear me; my communication will ever be made to a solitary listener, and will ever be unserviceable. Woe! Woe! Woe!"

As the Two old men, with these words, wrung their hands, it shot into Mr. Goodchild’s mind that he was in the terrible situation of being virtually alone with the spectre, and that Mr. Idle’s immoveability was explained by his having been charmed asleep at One o’clock. In the terror of this sudden discovery which produced an indescribable dread, he struggled so hard to get free from the four fiery threads, that he snapped them, after he had pulled them out to a great width. Being then out of bonds, he caught up Mr. Idle from the sofa and rushed down stairs with him.

"What are you about, Francis?" demanded Mr. Idle. "My bedroom is not down here. What the deuce are you carrying me at all for? I can walk with a stick now. I don't want to be carried. Put me down."

Mr. Goodchild put him down in the old hall, and looked about him wildly.

"What are you doing? Idiotically plunging at your own sex, and rescuing them or perishing in the attempt?" asked Mr. Idle, in a highly petulant state.

"The One old man!" cried Mr. Goodchild, distractedly, — "and the Two old men!"

Mr. Idle deigned no other reply than "The One old woman, I think you mean," as he began hobbling his way back up the staircase, with the assistance of its broad balustrade.

"I assure you, Tom," began Mr. Goodchild, attending at his side, "that since you fell asleep —"

"Come, I like that!" said Thomas Idle, "I haven't closed an eye!"

With the peculiar sensitiveness on the subject of the disgraceful action of going to sleep out of bed, which is the lot of all mankind, Mr. Idle persisted in this declaration. The same peculiar sensitiveness impelled Mr. Goodchild, on being taxed with the same crime, to repudiate it with honourable resentment. The settlement of the question of The One old man and The Two old men was thus presently complicated, and soon made quite impracticable. Mr. Idle said it was all Bride-cake, and fragments, newly arranged, of things seen and thought about in the day. Mr. Goodchild said how could that be, when he hadn't been asleep, and what right could Mr. Idle have to say so, who had been asleep? Mr. Idle said he had never been asleep, and

never did go to sleep, and that Mr. Goodchild, as a general rule, was always asleep. They consequently parted for the rest of the night, at their bedroom doors a little ruffled. Mr. Goodchild's last words were, that he had had, in that real and tangible old sitting-room of that real and tangible old Inn (he supposed Mr. Idle denied its existence?), every sensation and experience, the present record of which is now within a line or two of completion; and that he would write it out and print it every word. Mr. Idle returned that he might if he liked — and he did like, and has now done it.

CHAPTER V.

Two of the many passengers by a certain late Sunday evening train, Mr. Thomas Idle and Mr. Francis Goodchild, yielded up their tickets at a little rotten platform (converted into artificial touch-wood by smoke and ashes), deep in the manufacturing bosom of Yorkshire. A mysterious bosom it appeared, upon a damp, dark, Sunday night, dashed through in the train to the music of the whirling wheels, the panting of the engine, and the part-singing of hundreds of third-class excursionists, whose vocal efforts "bobbed arayound" from sacred to profane, from hymns, to our transatlantic sisters the Yankee Gal and Mairy Anne, in a remarkable way. There seemed to have been some large vocal gathering near to every lonely station on the line. No town was visible, no village was visible, no light was visible; but, a multitude got out singing, and a multitude got in singing, and the second multitude took up the hymns, and adopted our transatlantic sisters, and sang of their own egregious wickedness, and of their bobbing arayound, and of how the ship it was ready and the wind it was fair, and they were bayound for the sea, Mairy Anne, until they in their turn became a getting-out multitude, and were replaced by another getting-in multitude, who did the same. And at every station, the getting-in multitude, with an artistic reference to the completeness of their chorus, incessantly cried, as with one voice

while scuffling into the carriages, "We mun aa' gang toogither!"

The singing and the multitudes had trailed off as the lonely places were left and the great towns were neared, and the way had lain as silently as a train's way ever can, over the vague black streets of the great gulfs of towns, and among their branchless woods of vague black chimneys. These towns looked, in the cinderous wet, as though they had one and all been on fire and were just put out — a dreary and quenched panorama, many miles long.

Thus, Thomas and Francis got to Leeds; of which enterprising and important commercial centre it may be observed with delicacy, that you must either like it very much or not at all. Next day, the first of the Race-Week, they took train to Doncaster.

And instantly the character, both of travellers and of luggage, entirely changed, and no other business than race-business any longer existed on the face of the earth. The talk was all of horses and "John Scott." Guards whispered behind their hands to station-masters, of horses and John Scott. Men in cut-away coats and speckled cravats fastened with peculiar pins, and with the large bones of their legs developed under tight trousers, so that they should look as much as possible like horses' legs, paced up and down by twos at junction-stations, speaking low and moodily of horses and John Scott. The young clergyman in the black strait-waistcoat, who occupied the middle seat of the carriage, expounded in his peculiar pulpit-accent to the young and lovely Reverend Mrs. Crinoline, who occupied the opposite middle-seat, a few passages of rumour relative to "Oartheth, my love, and Mithter John Eth-cott." A bandy vagabond, with

a head like a Dutch cheese, in a fustian stable-suit, attending on a horse-box and going about the platforms with a halter hanging round his neck like a Calais burgher of the ancient period much degenerated, was courted by the best society, by reason of what he had to hint, when not engaged in eating straw, concerning "t'harses and Joon Scott." The engine-driver himself, as he applied one eye to his large stationary double-eye-glass on the engine, seemed to keep the other open, sideways, upon horses and John Scott.

Breaks and barriers at Doncaster station to keep the crowd off; temporary wooden avenues of ingress and egress, to help the crowd on. Forty extra porters sent down for this present blessed Race-Week, and all of them making up their betting-books in the lamp-room or somewhere else, and none of them to come and touch the luggage. Travellers disgorged into an open space, a howling wilderness of idle men. All work but race-work at a stand-still; all men at a stand-still. "Ey my word! Deant ask noon o' us to help wi' t' luggage. Bock your opinion loike a mon. Coom! Dang it, coom, t'harses and Joon Scott!" In the midst of the idle men, all the fly horses and omnibus horses of Doncaster and parts adjacent, rampant, rearing, backing, plunging, shying — apparently the result of their hearing of nothing but their own order and John Scott.

Grand Dramatic Company from London for the Race-Week. Poses Plastiques in the Grand Assembly Room up the Stable-Yard at seven and nine each evening, for the Race-Week. Grand Alliance Circus in the field beyond the bridge, for the Race-Week. Grand Exhibition of Aztec Lilliputians, important to all who want to be horrified cheap, for the Race-Week. Lodgings, grand

and not grand, but all at grand prices, ranging from ten pounds to twenty, for the Grand Race-Week!

Rendered giddy enough by these things, Messieurs Idle and Goodchild repaired to the quarters they had secured beforehand, and Mr. Goodchild looked down from the window into the surging street.

"By heaven, Tom!" cried he, after contemplating it, "I am in the Lunatic Asylum again, and these are all mad people under the charge of a body of designing keepers!"

All through the Race-Week, Mr. Goodchild never divested himself of this idea. Every day he looked out of window, with something of the dread of Lemuel Gulliver looking down at men after he returned home from the horse-country; and every day he saw the Lunatics, horse-mad, betting-mad, drunken-mad, vice-mad, and the designing Keepers always after them. The idea pervaded, like the second colour in shot-silk, the whole of Mr. Goodchild's impressions. They were much as follows:

Monday, mid-day. Races not to begin until to-morrow, but all the mob-Lunatics out, crowding the pavements of the one main street of pretty and pleasant Doncaster, crowding the road, particularly crowding the outside of the Betting Rooms, whooping and shouting loudly after all passing vehicles. Frightened lunatic horses occasionally running away, with infinite clatter. All degrees of men, from peers to paupers, betting incessantly. Keepers very watchful, and taking all good chances. An awful family likeness among the Keepers, to Mr. Palmer and Mr. Thurtell. With some knowledge of expression and some acquaintance with heads (thus writes Mr. Goodchild), I never have seen anywhere, so many repetitions of one

class of countenance and one character of head (both evil) as in this street at this time. Cunning, covetousness, secrecy, cold calculation, hard callousness and dire insensibility, are the uniform Keeper characteristics. Mr. Palmer passes me five times in five minutes, and, as I go down the street, the back of Mr. Thurtell's skull is always going on before me.

Monday evening. Town lighted up; more Lunatics out than ever; a complete choke and stoppage of the thoroughfare outside the Betting Rooms. Keepers, having dined, pervade the Betting Rooms, and sharply snap at the moneyed Lunatics. Some Keepers flushed with drink, and some not, but all close and calculating. A vague echoing roar of "t'harses" and "t'rases" always rising in the air, until midnight, at about which period it dies away in occasional drunken songs and straggling yells. But, all night, some unmannerly drinking-house in the neighbourhood opens its mouth at intervals and spits out a man too drunk to be retained: who thereupon makes what uproarious protest may be left in him, and either falls asleep where he tumbles, or is carried off in custody.

Tuesday morning, at daybreak. A sudden rising, as it were out of the earth, of all the obscene creatures, who sell "correct cards of the races." They may have been coiled in corners, or sleeping on door-steps, and, having all passed the night under the same set of circumstances, may all want to circulate their blood at the same time; but, however that may be, they spring into existence all at once and together, as though a new Cadmus had sown a race-horse's teeth. There is nobody up, to buy the cards; but, the cards are madly cried. There is no patronage to quarrel for; but, they madly

quarrel and fight. Conspicuous among these hyænas, as breakfast-time discloses, is a fearful creature in the general semblance of a man: shaken off his next-to-no legs by drink and devilry, bare-headed and bare-footed, with a great shock of hair like a horrible broom, and nothing on him but a ragged pair of trousers and a pink glazed-calico coat — made on him — so very tight that it is as evident that he could never take it off, as that he never does. This hideous apparition, inconceivably drunk, has a terrible power of making a gong-like imitation of the braying of an ass: which feat requires that he should lay his right jaw in his begrimed right paw, double himself up, and shake his bray out of himself, with much staggering on his next-to-no legs, and much twirling of his horrible broom, as if it were a mop. From the present minute, when he comes in sight holding up his cards to the windows, and hoarsely proposing purchase to My Lord, Your Excellency, Colonel, the Noble Captain, and Your Honorable Worship — from the present minute until the Grand Race-Week is finished, at all hours of the morning, evening, day, and night, shall the town reverberate, at capricious intervals, to the brays of this frightful animal the Gong-Donkey.

No very great racing to-day, so no very great amount of vehicles: though there is a good sprinkling, too: from farmers' carts and gigs, to carriages with post-horses and to fours-in-hand, mostly coming by the road from York, and passing on straight through the main street to the Course. A walk in the wrong direction may be a better thing for Mr. Goodchild to-day than the Course, so he walks in the wrong direction. Everybody gone to the races. Only children in the street. Grand Alliance Circus deserted; not one Star-Rider left; omnibus which forms

the Pay-Place, having on separate panels Pay here for the Boxes, Pay here for the Pit, Pay here for the Gallery, hove down in a corner and locked up; nobody near the tent but the man on his knees on the grass, who is making the paper balloons for the Star young gentlemen to jump through to-night. A pleasant road, pleasantly wooded. No labourers working in the fields; all gone "t'rances." The few late wenders of their way "t'rances," who are yet left driving on the road, stare in amazement at the recluse who is not going "t'rances." Roadside inn-keeper has gone "t'rances." Turnpike-man has gone "t'rances." His thrifty wife, washing clothes at the toll-house door, is going "t'rances" to-morrow. Perhaps there may be no one left to take the toll to-morrow; who knows? Though assuredly that would be neither turnpike-like, nor Yorkshire-like. The very wind and dust seem to be hurrying "t'rances," as they briskly pass the only wayfarer on the road. In the distance, the Railway Engine, waiting at the town-end, shrieks despairingly. Nothing but the difficulty of getting off the Line, restrains that Engine from going "t'rances," too, it is very clear.

At night, more Lunatics out than last night — and more Keepers. The latter very active at the Betting-Rooms, the street in front of which is now impassable. Mr. Palmer as before. Mr. Thurtell as before. Roar and uproar as before. Gradual subsidence as before. Unmannerly drinking house expectorates as before. Drunken negro-melodists, Gong-donkey, and correct cards, in the night.

On Wednesday morning, the morning of the great St. Leger, it becomes apparent that there has been a great influx since yesterday, both of Lunatics and Keepers

The families of the tradesmen over the way are no longer within human ken; their places know them no more; ten, fifteen, and twenty guinea-lodgers fill them. At the pastry-cook's second-floor window, a Keeper is brushing Mr. Thurtell's hair — thinking it his own. In the wax-chandler's attic, another Keeper is putting on Mr. Palmer's braces. In the gun-smith's nursery, a Lunatic is shaving himself. In the serious stationer's best sitting-room, three Lunatics are taking a combination-breakfast, praising the (cook's) devil, and drinking neat brandy in an atmosphere of last midnight's cigars. No family sanctuary is free from our Angelic messengers — we put up at the Angel — who in the guise of extra waiters for the grand Race-Week, rattle in and out of the most secret chambers of everybody's house, with dishes and tin covers, decanters, soda-water bottles, and glasses. An hour later. Down the street and up the street, as far as eyes can see and a good deal farther, there is a dense crowd; outside the Betting Rooms it is like a great struggle at a theatre door — in the days of theatres; or at the vestibule of the Spurgeon temple — in the days of Spurgeon. An hour later. Fusing into this crowd, and somehow getting through it, are all kinds of conveyances, and all kinds of foot-passengers; carts, with brick-makers and brick-makeresses jolting up and down on planks; drags, with the needful grooms behind, sitting crossed-armed in the needful manner, and slanting themselves backward from the soles of their boots at the needful angle; postboys, in the shining hats and smart jackets of the olden time, when stokers were not; beautiful Yorkshire horses, gallantly driven by their own breeders and masters. Under every pole, and every shaft, and every horse, and every wheel as it would

seem, the Gong-donkey — metallically braying, when not struggling for life, or whipped out of the way.

By one o'clock, all this stir has gone out of the streets, and there is no one left in them but Francis Goodchild. Francis Goodchild will not be left in them long; for, he too is on his way "t'races."

A most beautiful sight, Francis Goodchild finds "t'races" to be, when he has left fair Doncaster behind him, and comes out on the free course, with its agreeable prospect, its quaint Red House oddly changing and turning as Francis turns, its green grass, and fresh heath. A free course and an easy one, where Francis can roll smoothly where he will, and can choose between the start, or the coming-in, or the turn behind the brow of the hill, or any out-of-the-way point where he lists to see the throbbing horses straining every nerve, and making the sympathetic earth throb as they come by. Francis much delights to be, not in the Grand Stand, but where he can see it, rising against the sky with its vast tiers of little white dots of faces, and its last high rows and corners of people, looking like pins stuck into an enormous pin-cushion — not quite so symmetrically as his orderly eye could wish, when people change or go away. When the race is nearly run out, it is as good as the race to him to see the flutter among the pins, and the change in them from dark to light, as hats are taken off and waved. Not less full of interest, the loud anticipation of the winner's name, the swelling, and the final roar; then, the quick dropping of all the pins out of their places, the revelation of the shape of the bare pin-cushion, and the closing-in of the whole host of Lunatic and Keepers, in the rear of the three

horses with bright-coloured riders, who have not yet quite subdued their gallop though the contest is over.

Mr. Goodchild would appear to have been by no means free from lunacy himself at "t'rances," though not of the prevalent kind. He is suspected by Mr. Idle to have fallen into a dreadful state concerning a pair of little lilac gloves and a little bonnet that he saw there. Mr. Idle asserts, that he did afterwards repeat at the Angel, with an appearance of being lunatically seized, some rhapsody to the following effect: "O little lilac gloves! And O winning little bonnet, making in conjunction with her golden hair quite a Glory in the sunlight round the pretty head, why anything in the world but you and me! Why may not this day's running — of horses, to all the rest: of precious sands of life to me — be prolonged through an everlasting autumn-sunshine, without a sunset! Slave of the Lamp, or Ring, strike me yonder gallant equestrian Clerk of the Course, in the scarlet coat, motionless on the green grass for ages! Friendly Devil on Two Sticks, for ten times ten thousand years, keep Blink-Bonny jibbing at the post, and let us have no start! Arab drums, powerful of old to summon Genii in the desert, sound of yourselves and raise a troop for me in the desert of my heart, which shall so enchant this dusty barouche (with a conspicuous excise-plate, resembling the Collector's door-plate at a turnpike), that I, within it, loving the little lilac gloves, the winning little bonnet, and the dear unknown-wearer with the golden hair, may wait by her side for ever, to see a Great St. Leger that shall never be run!"

Thursday morning. After a tremendous night of crowding, shouting, drinking-house expectoration, Gong-donkey, and correct cards. Symptoms of yesterday's

gains in the way of drink, and of yesterday's losses in the way of money, abundant. Money-losses very great. As usual, nobody seems to have won; but, large losses and many losers are unquestionable facts. Both Lunatics and Keepers, in general very low. Several of both kinds look in at the chemist's while Mr. Goodchild is making a purchase there, to be "picked up." One red-eyed Lunatic, flushed, faded, and disordered, enters hurriedly and cries savagely, "Hond us a gloss of sal volatile in wather, or soom dommed thing o' thot sart!" Faces at the Betting-Rooms very long, and a tendency to bite nails observable. Keepers likewise given this morning to standing about solitary, with their hands in their pockets, looking down at their boots as they fit them into cracks of the pavement, and then looking up whistling and walking away. Grand Alliance Circus out, in procession; buxom lady-member of Grand Alliance, in crimson riding-habit, fresher to look at, even in her paint under the day sky, than the cheeks of Lunatics or Keepers. Spanish Cavalier appears to have lost yesterday, and jingles his bossed bridle with disgust, as if he were paying. Re-action also apparent at the Guildhall opposite, whence certain pickpockets come out handcuffed together, with that peculiar walk which is never seen under any other circumstances — a walk expressive of going to jail, game, but still of jails being in bad taste and arbitrary, and how would *you* like it if it was you instead of me, as it ought to be! Mid-day. Town filled as yesterday, but not so full; and emptied as yesterday, but not so empty. In the evening, Angel ordinary where every Lunatic and Keeper has his modest daily meal of turtle, venison, and wine, not so crowded as yesterday,

and not so noisy. At night, the theatre. More abstracted faces in it, than one ever sees at public assemblies; such faces wearing an expression which strongly reminds Mr. Goodchild of the boys at school who were "going up next," with their arithmetic or mathematics. These boys are, no doubt, going up to-morrow with *their* sums and figures. Mr. Palmer and Mr. Thurtell in the boxes O. P. Mr. Thurtell and Mr. Palmer in the boxes P. S. The firm of Thurtell, Palmer, and Thurtell, in the boxes Centre. A most odious tendency observable in these distinguished gentlemen to put vile constructions on sufficiently innocent phrases in the play, and then to applaud them in a Satyr-like manner. Behind Mr. Goodchild, with a party of other Lunatics and one Keeper, the express incarnation of the thing called a "gent." A gentleman born; a gent manufactured. A something with a scarf round its neck, and a slipshod speech issuing from behind the scarf; more depraved, more foolish, more ignorant, more unable to believe in any noble or good thing of any kind, than the stupidest Bosjesman. The thing is but a boy in years, and is addled with drink. To do its company justice, even its company is ashamed of it, as it drawls its slang criticisms on the representation, and inflames Mr. Goodchild with a burning ardour to fling it into the pit. Its remarks are so horrible, that Mr. Goodchild, for the moment, even doubts whether that is a wholesome Art, which sets women apart on a high floor before such a thing as this, though as good as its own sisters, or its own mother — whom Heaven forgive for bringing it into the world! But, the consideration that a low nature must make a low world of its own to live in, whatever the real materials, or it could no more exist than any of us could

without the sense of touch, brings Mr. Goodchild to reason: the rather, because the thing soon drops its downy chin upon its scarf, and slobbers itself asleep.

Friday Morning. Early fights. Gong-donkey, and correct cards. Again, a great set towards the races, though not so great a set as on Wednesday. Much packing going on too, upstairs at the gunsmith's, the wax-chandler's, and the serious stationer's; for there will be a heavy drift of Lunatics and Keepers to London by the afternoon train. The course as pretty as ever; the great pincushion as like a pincushion, but not nearly so full of pins; whole rows of pins wanting. On the great event of the day, both Lunatics and Keepers become inspired with rage; and there is a violent scuffling, and a rushing at the losing jockey, and an emergence of the said jockey from a swaying and menacing crowd, protected by friends, and looking the worse for wear; which is a rough proceeding, though animating to see from a pleasant distance. After the great event, rills begin to flow from the pincushion towards the railroad; the rills swell into rivers; the rivers soon unite into a lake. The lake floats Mr. Goodchild into Doncaster, past the Itinerant personage in black, by the way-side telling him from the vantage ground of a legibly printed placard on a pole that for all these things the Lord will bring him to judgment. No turtle and venison ordinary this evening; that is all over. No Betting at the rooms; nothing there but the plants in pots, which have, all the week, been stood about the entry to give it an innocent appearance, and which have sorely sickened by this time.

Saturday. Mr. Idle wishes to know at breakfast, what were those dreadful groanings in his bedroom doorway in the night? Mr. Goodchild answers, Nightmare.

Mr. Idle repels the calumny, and calls the waiter. The Angel is very sorry — had intended to explain; but you see, gentlemen, there was a gentleman dined down stairs with two more, and he had lost a deal of money, and he would drink a deal of wine, and in the night he “took the horrors,” and got up; and as his friends could do nothing with him he laid himself down, and groaned at Mr. Idle’s door. “And he ~~did~~ groan there,” Mr. Idle says; “and you will please to imagine me inside, ‘taking the horrors’ too!”

So far, the picture of Doncaster on the occasion of its great sporting anniversary, offers probably a general representation of the social condition of the town, in the past as well as in the present time. The sole local phenomenon of the current year, which may be considered as entirely unprecedented in its way, and which certainly claims, on that account, some slight share of notice, consists in the actual existence of one remarkable individual, who is sojourning in Doncaster, and who, neither directly nor indirectly, has anything at all to do, in any capacity whatever, with the racing amusements of the week. Ranging throughout the entire crowd that fills the town, and including the inhabitants as well as the visitors, nobody is to be found altogether disconnected with the business of the day, excepting this one unparalleled man. He does not bet on the races, like the sporting men. He does not assist the races, like the jockeys, starters, judges, and grooms. He does not look on at the races, like Mr. Goodchild and his fellow-spectators. He does not profit by the races, like the hotel-keepers and the trades-people. He does not minister to the necessities of the races, like the booth-keepers, the postilions, the waiters, and the hawkers of

Lists. He does not assist the attractions of the races, like the actors at the theatre, the riders at the circus, or the posturers at the Poses Plastiques. Absolutely and literally, he is the only individual in Doncaster who stands by the brink of the full-flowing racestream, and is not swept away by it in common with all the rest of his species. Who is this modern hermit, this recluse of the St. Leger-week, this inscrutably ungregarious being, who lives apart from the amusements and activities of his fellow-creatures? Surely, there is little difficulty in guessing that clearest and easiest of all riddles. Who could he be, but Mr. Thomas Idle?

Thomas had suffered himself to be taken to Doncaster, just as he would have suffered himself to be taken to any other place in the habitable globe which would guarantee him the temporary possession of a comfortable sofa to rest his ankle on. Once established at the hotel, with his leg on one cushion and his back against another, he formally declined taking the slightest interest in any circumstance whatever connected with the races, or with the people who were assembled to see them. Francis Goodchild, anxious that the hours should pass by his crippled travelling-companion as lightly as possible, suggested that his sofa should be moved to the window, and that he should amuse himself by looking out at the moving panorama of humanity, which the view from it of the principal street presented. Thomas, however, steadily declined profiting by the suggestion.

"The farther I am from the window," he said, "the better, Brother Francis, I shall be pleased. I have nothing in common with the one prevalent idea of all those people who are passing in the street. Why should I care to look at them?"

"I hope I have nothing in common with the prevalent idea of a great many of them, either," answered Goodchild, thinking of the sporting gentlemen whom he had met in the course of his wanderings about Doncaster. "But, surely, among all the people who are walking by the house, at this very moment, you may find —"

"Not one living creature," interposed Thomas, "who is not, in one way or another, interested in horses, and who is not, in a greater or less degree, an admirer of them. Now, I hold opinions in reference to these particular members of the quadruped creation, which may lay claim (as I believe) to the disastrous distinction of being unpartaken by any other human being, civilised or savage, over the whole surface of the earth. Taking the horse as an animal in the abstract, Francis, I cordially despise him from every point of view."

"Thomas," said Goodchild, "confinement to the house has begun to affect your biliary secretions. I shall go to the chemist's and get you some physic."

"I object," continued Thomas, quietly possessing himself of his friend's hat, which stood on a table near him, — "I object, first, to the personal appearance of the horse. I protest against the conventional idea of beauty, as attached to that animal. I think his nose too long, his forehead too low, and his legs (except in the case of the cart-horse) ridiculously thin by comparison with the size of his body. Again, considering how big an animal he is, I object to the contemptible delicacy of his constitution. Is he not the sickliest creature in creation? Does any child catch cold as easily as a horse? Does he not sprain his fetlock, for all his appearance of superior strength, as easily as I sprained my ankle? Furthermore, to take him from another point

of view, what a helpless wretch he is! No fine lady requires more constant waiting-on than a horse. Other animals can make their own toilette: he must have a groom. You will tell me that this is because we want to make his coat artificially glossy. Glossy! Come home with me, and see my cat, — my clever cat, who can groom herself! Look at your own dog! see how the intelligent creature currycombs himself with his own honest teeth! Then, again, what a fool the horse is, what a poor, nervous fool! He will start at a piece of white paper in the road as if it was a lion. His one idea, when he hears a noise that he is not accustomed to, is to run away from it. What do you say to those two common instances of the sense and courage of this absurdly overpraised animal? I might multiply them to two hundred, if I chose to exert my mind and waste my breath, which I never do. I prefer coming at once to my last charge against the horse, which is the most serious of all, because it affects his moral character. I accuse him boldly, in his capacity of servant to man, of slyness and treachery. I brand him publicly, no matter how mild he may look about the eyes, or how sleek he may be about the coat, as a systematic betrayer, whenever he can get the chance, of the confidence reposed in him. What do you mean by laughing and shaking your head at me?"

"Oh, Thomas, Thomas!" said Goodchild. "You had better give me my hat; you had better let me get you that physic."

"I will let you get anything you like, including a composing draught for yourself," said Thomas, irritably alluding to his fellow-apprentice's inexhaustible activity, "if you will only sit quiet for five minutes longer, and

hear me out. I say again the horse is a betrayer of the confidence reposed in him; and that opinion, let me add, is drawn from my own personal experience, and is not based on any fanciful theory whatever. You shall have two instances, two overwhelming instances. Let me start the first of these by asking, what is the distinguishing quality which the Shetland Pony has arrogated to himself, and is still perpetually trumpeting through the world by means of popular report and books on Natural History? I see the answer in your face: it is the quality of being Sure-Footed. He professes to have other virtues, such as hardiness and strength, which you may discover on trial; but the one thing which he insists on your believing, when you get on his back, is that he may be safely depended on not to tumble down with you. Very good. Some years ago, I was in Shetland with a party of friends. They insisted on taking me with them to the top of a precipice that overhung the sea. It was a great distance off, but they all determined to walk to it except me. I was wiser then than I was with you at Carrock, and I determined to be carried to the precipice. There was no carriage road in the island, and nobody offered (in consequence, as I suppose, of the imperfectly-civilised state of the country) to bring me a sedan-chair, which is naturally what I should have liked best. A Shetland pony was produced instead. I remembered my Natural History, I recalled popular report, and I got on the little beast's back, as any other man would have done in my position, placing implicit confidence in the sureness of his feet. And how did he repay that confidence? Brother Francis, carry your mind on from morning to noon. Picture to yourself a howling wilderness of grass

and bog, bounded by low stony hills. Pick out one particular spot in that imaginary scene, and sketch me in it, with outstretched arms, curved back, and heels in the air, plunging headforemost into a black patch of water and mud. Place just behind me the legs, the body, and the head of a sure-footed Shetland pony, all stretched flat on the ground, and you will have produced an accurate representation of a very lamentable fact. And the moral device, Francis, of this picture will be to testify that when gentlemen put confidence in the legs of Shetland ponies, they will find to their cost that they are leaning on nothing but broken reeds. There is my first instance — and what have you got to say to that?"

"Nothing, but that I want my hat," answered Goodchild, starting up and walking restlessly about the room.

"You shall have it in a minute," rejoined Thomas. "My second instance" — (Goodchild groaned, and sat down again) — "My second instance is more appropriate to the present time and place, for it refers to a race-horse. Two years ago an excellent friend of mine, who was desirous of prevailing on me to take regular exercise, and who was well enough acquainted with the weakness of my legs to expect no very active compliance with his wishes on their part, offered to make me a present of one of his horses. Hearing that the animal in question had started in life on the turf, I declined accepting the gift with many thanks; adding, by way of explanation, that I looked on a race-horse as a kind of embodied hurricane, upon which no sane man of my character and habits could be expected to seat himself. My friend replied that, however appropriate my metaphor

might be as applied to race-horses in general, it was singularly unsuitable as applied to the particular horse which he proposed to give me. From a foal upwards this remarkable animal had been the idlest and most sluggish of his race. Whatever capacities for speed he might possess he had kept so strictly to himself, that no amount of training had ever brought them out. He had been found hopelessly slow as a racer, and hopelessly lazy as a hunter, and was fit for nothing but a quiet, easy life of it with an old gentleman or an invalid. When I heard this account of the horse, I don't mind confessing that my heart warmed to him. Visions of Thomas Idle ambling serenely on the back of a steed as lazy as himself, presenting to a restless world the soothing and composite spectacle of a kind of sluggardly Centaur, too peaceable in his habits to alarm anybody, swam attractively before my eyes. I went to look at the horse in the stable. Nice fellow! he was fast asleep with a kitten on his back. I saw him taken out for an airing by the groom. If he had had trousers on his legs I should not have known them from my own, so deliberately were they lifted up, so gently were they put down, so slowly did they get over the ground. From that moment I gratefully accepted my friend's offer. I went home; the horse followed me — by a slow train. Oh, Francis, how devoutly I believed in that horse! how carefully I looked after all his little comforts! I had never gone the length of hiring a man-servant to wait on myself; but I went to the expense of hiring one to wait upon him. If I thought a little of myself when I bought the softest saddle that could be had for money, I thought also of my horse. When the man at the shop afterwards offered me spurs and a whip, I turned from

him with horror. When I sallied out for my first ride, I went purposely unarmed with the means of hurrying my steed. He proceeded at his own pace every step of the way; and when he stopped, at last, and blew out both his sides with a heavy sigh, and turned his sleepy head and looked behind him, I took him home again, as I might take home an artless child who said to me, "If you please, sir, I am tired." For a week this complete harmony between me and my horse lasted undisturbed. At the end of that time, when he had made quite sure of my friendly confidence in his laziness, when he had thoroughly acquainted himself with all the little weaknesses of my seat (and their name is Legion), the smouldering treachery and ingratitude of the equine nature blazed out in an instant. Without the slightest provocation from me, with nothing passing him at the time but a pony-chaise driven by an old lady, he started in one instant from a state of sluggish depression to a state of frantic high spirits. He kicked, he plunged, he shied, he pranced, he capered fearfully. I sat on him as long as I could, and when I could sit no longer, I fell off. No, Francis! this is not a circumstance to be laughed at, but to be wept over. What would be said of a Man who had requited my kindness in that way? Range over all the rest of the animal creation, and where will you find me an instance of treachery so black as this? The cow that kicks down the milking-pail may have some reason for it; she may think herself taxed too heavily to contribute to the dilution of human tea and the greasing of human bread. The tiger who springs out on me unawares has the excuse of being hungry at the time, to say nothing of the further justification of being a total stranger to me. The very flea who sur-

prises me in my sleep may defend his act of assassination on the ground that I, in my turn, am always ready to murder him when I am awake. I defy the whole body of Natural Historians to move me, logically, off the ground that I have taken in regard to the horse. Receive back your hat, Brother Francis, and go to the chemist's, if you please; for I have now done. Ask me to take anything you like, except an interest in the Doncaster races. Ask me to look at anything you like, except an assemblage of people all animated by feelings of a friendly and admiring nature towards the horse. You are a remarkably well-informed man, and you have heard of hermits. Look upon me as a member of that ancient fraternity, and you will sensibly add to the many obligations which Thomas Idle is proud to owe to Francis Goodchild."

Here, fatigued by the effort of excessive talking, disputatious Thomas waved one hand languidly, laid his head back on the sofa-pillow, and calmly closed his eyes.

At a later period, Mr. Goodchild assailed his travelling companion boldly from the impregnable fortress of common sense. But Thomas, though tamed in body by drastic discipline, was still as mentally unapproachable as ever on the subject of his favourite delusion.

The view from the window after Saturday's breakfast is altogether changed. The tradesmen's families have all come back again. The serious stationer's young woman of all work is shaking a duster out of the window of the combination breakfast-room; a child is playing with a doll, where Mr. Thurtell's hair was brushed; a sanitary scrubbing is in progress on the spot where Mr. Palmer's

braces were put on. No signs of the Races are in the streets, but the tramps and the tumbledown carts and trucks laden with drinking-forms and tables and remnants of booths, that are making their way out of the town as fast as they can. The Angel, which has been cleared for action all the week, already begins restoring every neat and comfortable article of furniture to its own neat and comfortable place. The Angel's daughters (pleasanter angels Mr. Idle and Mr. Goodchild never saw, nor more quietly expert in their business, nor more superior to the common vice of being above it), have a little time to rest, and to air their cheerful faces among the flowers in the yard. It is market-day. The market looks unusually natural, comfortable, and wholesome; the market-people too. The town seems quite restored, when, hark! a metallic bray — The Gong-donkey!

The wretched animal has not cleared off with the rest, but is here, under the window. How much more inconceivably drunk now, how much more begrimed of paw, how much more tight of calico hide, how much more stained and daubed and dirty and dunghilly, from his horrible broom to his tender toes, who shall say! He cannot even shake the bray out of himself now, without laying his cheek so near to the mud of the street, that he pitches over after delivering it. Now, prone in the mud, and now backing himself up against shop-windows, the owners of which come out in terror to remove him; now, in the drinking-shop, and now in the tobacconist's, where he goes to buy tobacco, and makes his way into the parlor, and where he gets a cigar, which in half-a-minute he forgets to smoke; now dancing, now dozing, now cursing, and now compli-

menting My Lord, the Colonel, the Noble Captain, and Your Honorable Worship, the Gong-donkey kicks up his heels, occasionally braying, until suddenly, he beholds the dearest friend he has in the world coming down the street.

The dearest friend the Gong-donkey has in the world, is a sort of Jackall, in a dull mangy black hide, of such small pieces that it looks as if it were made of blacking bottles turned inside out and cobbled together. The dearest friend in the world (inconceivably drunk too) advances at the Gong-donkey, with a hand on each thigh, in a series of humorous springs and stops, wagging his head as he comes. The Gong-donkey regarding him with attention and with the warmest affection, suddenly perceives that he is the greatest enemy he has in the world, and hits him hard in the countenance. The astonished Jackall closes with the Donkey, and they roll over and over in the mud, pummelling one another. A Police Inspector, supernaturally endowed with patience, who has long been looking on from the Guildhall-steps, says, to a myrmidon, "Lock 'em up! Bring 'em in!"

Appropriate finish to the Grand Race Week. The Gong-donkey, captive and last trace of it, conveyed into limbo, where they cannot do better than keep him until next Race Week. The Jackall is wanted too, and is much looked for, over the way and up and down. But, having had the good-fortune to be undermost at the time of the capture, he has vanished into air.

On Saturday afternoon, Mr. Goodchild walks out and looks at the Course. It is quite deserted; heaps of broken crockery and bottles are raised to its memory; and correct cards and other fragments of paper are blow-

ing about it, as the regulation little paper-books, carried by the French soldiers in their breasts, were seen, soon after the battle was fought, blowing idly about the plains of Waterloo.

Where will these present idle leaves be blown by the idle winds, and where will the last of them be one day lost and forgotten? An idle question, and an idle thought; and with it Mr. Idle fitly makes his bow, and Mr. Goodchild his, and thus ends the Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices.

END OF VOL. VI.





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